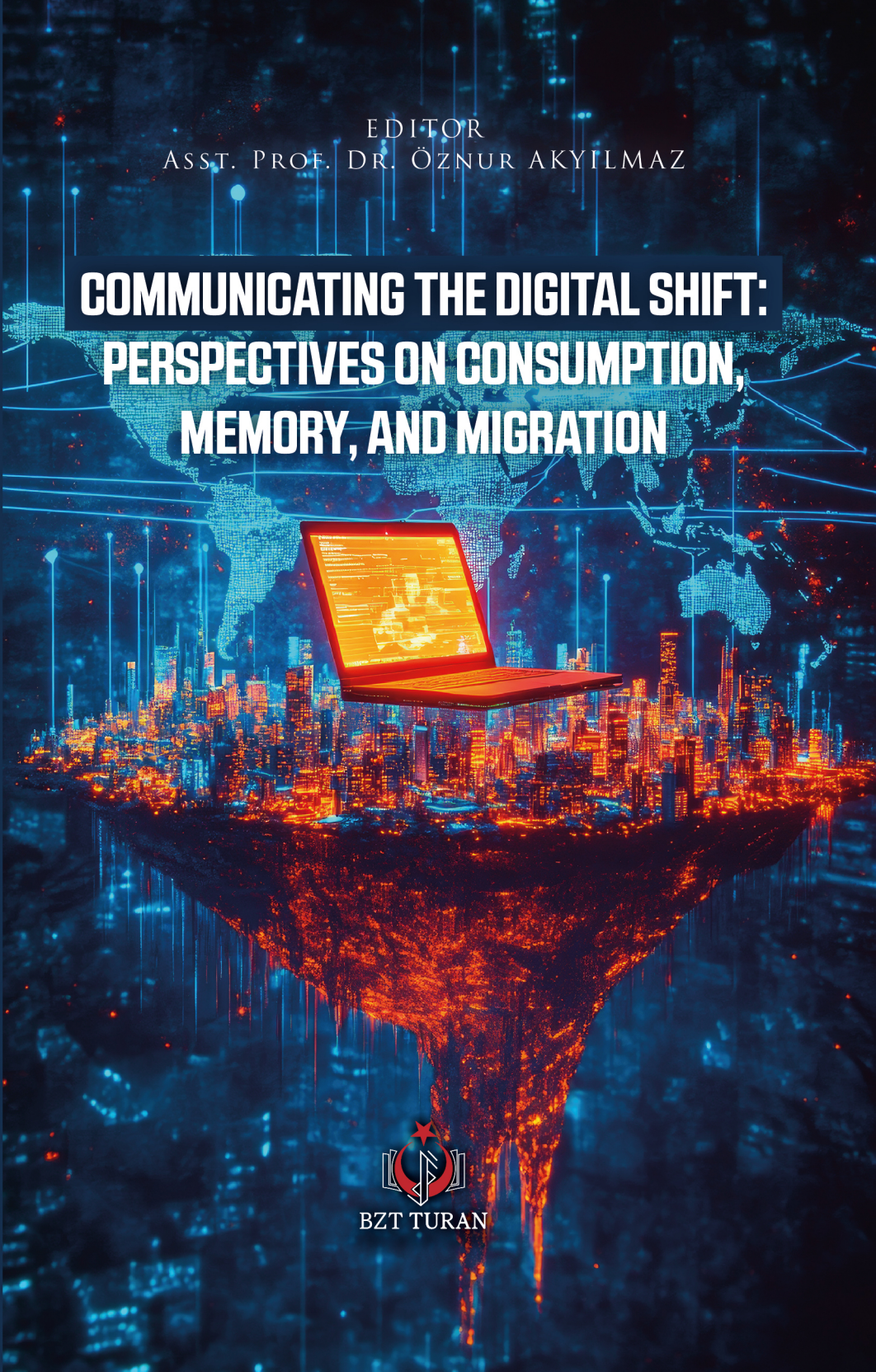
EDITOR
Asst. Prof. Dr. Öznur AKYILMAZ

COMMUNICATING THE DIGITAL SHIFT: PERSPECTIVES ON CONSUMPTION, MEMORY, AND MIGRATION



BZT TURAN

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Asst. Prof. Dr. Öznur AKYILMAZ

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Preface

The rapid evolution of digital technologies has done more than just upgrade our tools; it has fundamentally reconfigured the ways we desire, remember, and relate to one another. We are currently navigating what can be termed a "Digital Shift"—a profound transition where traditional social structures are being translated into platform-mediated realities. This book, "Communicating the Digital Shift: Perspectives on Consumption, Memory, and Migration," serves as a multidisciplinary map for this new terrain, exploring how communication dynamics act as the primary catalyst for modern transformation.

The journey of this volume begins with the intangible—the psychology of consumption. By revisiting the theories of Simmel and Belk, we examine how scarcity and desire are communicated in an age of digital abundance. As we move from the abstract to the empirical, the focus shifts to the tangible data of the present, specifically Türkiye's 2024 digital scorecard. Here, we analyze how citizens interact with the state and the market through e-government and e-commerce platforms, reflecting a society in high-speed transition.

However, the "Digital Shift" is not merely about the future; it is deeply entangled with the past. This collection investigates how collective memory—such as the historical presence of Russians in Erzurum—is preserved or reshaped through communication. Even our most traditional institutions are not immune; we explore the "invisible face" of digitalization within the education system, where teacher labor and parent-school cooperation are being redefined by platformization and "analog" academic legacies. Finally, the book addresses migration—perhaps the most human of all processes—redefining it as a complex communicative and social phenomenon in a networked world.

As editors, our goal was to bring together diverse inquiries that, at first glance, might seem disparate. Yet, through the lens of communication science, a clear pattern emerges: whether we are discussing a consumer's desire, a teacher's digital labor, or a migrant's journey, we are witnessing the various ways in which the digital shift is being "communicated" and lived.

We hope this volume provides scholars, students, and curious readers with insightful perspectives on the complexities of our contemporary age. The shift is ongoing, and the dialogue remains open.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Öznur Akyılmaz

The Editor

April 2026

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CHAPTER 1

Desire, Distance, and the Object in Consumer Culture: Scarcity and Inaccessibility in the Context of Simmel and Belk

Beril ÖZER[1]

Abstract

This study examines the role of scarcity and inaccessibility in the production of consumer desire by bringing into dialogue Georg Simmel's theory of value and distance with Russell W. Belk, Güliz Ger, and Søren Askegaard's phenomenological analysis of consumer passion. Situated within the broader framework of consumer culture, the article argues that desire is neither a simple response to need nor a purely rational evaluation of utility. Rather, it emerges through a dynamic interplay between subject and object structured by distance, resistance, and hope Drawing on Simmel's conception of value as the outcome of surmountable distance and sacrifice, the study demonstrates that objects become desirable not because they are inherently valuable, but because access to them is mediated by obstacles-temporal, economic, social, or symbolic. Belk and colleagues' notion of the "fire of desire" further deepens this analysis by conceptualizing desire as cyclical, embodied, and sustained through imagination, scarcity, and the affective tension between hope and uncertainty. In this theoretical synthesis, scarcity is not merely a quantitative reduction in supply but a socially and culturally mediated mechanism that intensifies longing

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as long as the object remains attainable. The article then evaluates contemporary marketing practices-such as limited-time offers, limited-quantity promotions, countdown timers, and "only a few left" messages-as practical manifestations of Simmelian distance. These discursive strategies construct compressed forms of surmountable distance that activate desire, accelerate decision-making, and often trigger fear of missing out (FOMO). However, the effectiveness of such tactics depends on context, product type, involvement level, and perceived authenticity. When scarcity becomes excessive or perceived as manipulative, it may weaken trust and diminish persuasive impact. By integrating classical sociological theory with contemporary consumer research, this study provides a conceptual framework for understanding scarcity not only as a marketing tool but as a central mechanism in the symbolic and experiential economy of desire. It concludes that while scarcity strategies may enhance short-term engagement and purchase intention, they also contribute to ongoing cycles of dissatisfaction and renewed longing, raising important ethical and cultural questions about the sustainability of desire-driven consumption.

Keywords: Scarcity, Consumer Desire, Distance and Value, Russell W. Belk, Georg Simmel

Introduction

Modern consumer culture is not limited to meeting people's basic needs. In contemporary society, consumption plays a central role in the construction of individual identities, status, and social relationships. Consumption refers not only to the use of material and immaterial values, but also to a social and economic form of relationship-shaped by time and space-based on needs, wants, desires, and the goods and services required to satisfy them (Orçan, 2004, p. 13). In this sense, consumption functions as a social and cultural practice through which individuals living in modern cities construct their differences. The concept of consumer culture, in turn, centers on the world of products and their position within social relations, emerging from economic structures that have shifted from production toward consumption. During the Industrial Revolution and the process of urbanization, the self-sufficient producer was replaced by the modern individual who turns toward ready-made consumption and constructs identity through what is consumed. In societies where consumer culture is dominant, consumption practices extend far beyond the satisfaction of basic needs. According to Fatih Baritci (2023), consumption operates within a commercialized environment in which hedonistic fantasies, conspicuous consumption, and the desire to belong to a group become prominent; individuals shape their consumption in pursuit of symbolic goals

such as prestige, visibility, group membership, or upward mobility. Thinkers such as Bocock and Baudrillard emphasize that consumption is always the consumption of symbols and signs. Increasingly, individuals construct their sense of identity by displaying the products they purchase, and the anticipation of consumption often becomes more pleasurable than ownership itself. For this reason, modern consumer culture appears not merely as an economic phenomenon, but as a social, psychological, and cultural one (Yavuz, 2021).

Desire and pleasure, which lie at the center of consumer culture, are sustained through the continuous production of seemingly unlimited and insatiable needs. Individuals influenced by the ideology of consumption continue to desire objects displayed in the media even when they lack the purchasing power to acquire them. This persistent desire reinforces the idea of endless necessity that underpins consumer culture. Advertising, rather than responding to existing needs, produces new wants and desires. Through marketing messages that invoke notions such as "the other phone," "the other house," or "the other body," consumers are directed toward objects they do not possess. As a result, consumption becomes a spectacle shaped by desire rather than necessity.

This study brings together two major theoretical approaches to understand how desire emerges and intensifies within consumer culture. The concepts of value, distance, and desire developed by Georg Simmel in The Philosophy of Money (2017), along with Russell Belk and his colleagues' (2003) analysis of consumer passion through the metaphor of the "fire of desire," both highlight the determining role of scarcity and inaccessibility in the formation of desire. Drawing on these two theoretical frameworks, the study aims to conceptually and theoretically discuss scarcity-based discourses commonly used in advertising, such as "limited time," "only three items left," "last day," and "final sale." Therefore, rather than presenting an empirical analysis, this research evaluates the relationship between such advertising discourses and desire, value, and consumer motivation within the framework of theoretical literature.

Value, Distance, and Desire in Simmel

In Simmel's framework, value is constructed through the relationship between the subject and the object, particularly through the dynamics of distance and sacrifice. Value gains meaning through the difficulty of attaining the object. In other words, when direct accessibility disappears, desire intensifies. According to Simmel (1997), for an object to be desired, a certain degree of resistance or obstacle is necessary; otherwise, the formation of desire

and value cannot develop. Distance is not merely spatial; it also manifests in economic, temporal, social, and cognitive forms. Long waiting periods, high prices, social stratification, or informational complexity all represent different types of distance that shape desire and value in distinct ways. Within the Simmelian framework, the common theme is that any cost involved in accessing a resource-whether time, effort, or money-is perceived as a form of sacrifice. As this sacrifice increases, so does the value attributed to the object. The money economy, by amplifying and deepening social inequalities, renders objects with different qualitative characteristics comparable and exchangeable through a shared quantitative measure. By reducing qualitative differences to the question of "how much?", money fosters an increasingly calculative and detached attitude toward objects. In modern consumer culture, processes such as fashion and luxury construct new forms of distance within this monetary world. As innovations introduced by elite groups diffuse to the masses, desire shifts toward new objects. Practices such as waiting lists or limited production, for example, create "surmountable" distances that stimulate consumer desire in line with Simmelian logic (Simmel, 2017).

According to Simmel (1997), economic value is not an inherent property of the object itself; rather, it emerges from the relationship between the subject and the object. An object gains value only when direct possession is prevented and a certain "distance" is established between the subject and the object. In this context, Simmel emphasizes that without an interruption in immediate gratification-without resistance or obstacle-neither desire nor value can fully develop. Therefore, attaining the object requires a certain cost or sacrifice. It is precisely this sacrifice that transforms the object from a matter of purely subjective preference into something that acquires a more objective value. For this reason, Simmel regards exchange as the "supra-individual" source of economic value: "Economic exchange grants things a super-subjective value and determines them reciprocally." In sum, in Simmel's (1997) framework, value is formed in proportion to the effort and sacrifice required to access the object.

Delay and Obstacles: Value emerges when the object is pushed into a position that does not provide immediate gratification. Desire and value arise only through the postponement of pleasure; otherwise, the object becomes reduced to a momentary and easily attainable satisfaction, thereby losing its distinctiveness and becoming ordinary.

The Role of Sacrifice: According to Simmel, the effectiveness of a value object is directly proportional to the sacrifice made in accessing it. For instance, the labor or time invested in production forms the psychological foundation of

the value attributed to the object. Although this may appear "irrational" from a strictly economic perspective, Simmel argues that obstacles and sacrifice are essential for desire to reach a heightened level.

Exchange and Objectification: The factor that renders value independent from purely subjective desire is exchange. According to Simmel, value assumes a more objective form through a process of mutual sacrifice-that is, through exchange. In such moments, the object ceases to be merely the object of an individual's desire and becomes a point of equilibrium within the scale of others' desires as well.

Tablo 1. Types of Distance and Their Effects

Type of Distance	**Explanation**	**Effect on Desire / Value**
Spatial Distance	Physical distance or geographical barriers (for example, remote markets).	As distance increases, difficulty of access and waiting emerge; while a certain degree of distance can create a productive sense of limitation, excessive distance may weaken desire.
Temporal Distance	Time-related barriers such as waiting periods, delivery delays, queues, or pre-order systems.	If the waiting period remains within reasonable limits, the sacrifice of patience deepens desire and adds to the object's perceived value. However, excessively long delays may diminish the sense of value.
Economic / Price-Based Distance	Access conditions that require a high price, fee, or turnover.	A high price or cost requires a tangible sacrifice-namely, the expenditure of money-to obtain the object. This sacrifice increases the object's psychological value.
Social / Symbolic Distance	Socio-cultural barriers such as status differences, class norms, or prestige-related constraints.	It creates a perception of inclusion within or exclusion from a particular class or group. Distances that require effort to attain privileged status reinforce the sense of value and exclusivity.
Cognitive / Conceptual Distance	Information barriers related to the object's meaning or complexity (e.g., authenticity, mystery).	Complexity and uncertainty generate desire by arousing curiosity. However, excessive complexity or incomprehensibility may lead to confusion and reduced engagement.

This table demonstrates that each type of distance enhances desire when it remains surmountable, yet becomes restrictive when it exceeds a certain threshold. From a Simmelian perspective, the crucial point is that every form of distance represents a kind of sacrifice or threshold. The greater the sacrifice involved, the stronger the perceived value. In this context, scarcity strategies

employed in modern consumption-such as limited production or sales restricted to specific audiences-effectively create new "distances" that activate the very dynamic Simmel anticipated (Li et al., 2023).

The Mechanism of Desire Production

For Simmel, desire is an internal process of tension that emerges when immediate access to the object is prevented. Within this process, two main stages stand out:

Deferred Gratification and Obstacles: For desire to take shape, gratification must first be postponed; the object must not be immediately obtainable. When something lies plainly before us, desire does not arise. However, once a certain barrier is introduced-such as time constraints, social approval, or price obstacles-desire begins to awaken.

The Threshold of Surmountability: Within the Simmelian framework, a moderate degree of distance is crucial for both desire and value. If the object becomes entirely inaccessible, desire weakens and eventually fades. Conversely, when the object is exceptionally easy to obtain, its value declines. The strongest desire emerges in relation to objects that appear almost within reach, yet still require some effort. Simmel illustrates this dynamic through the metaphor of love: desire gains continuity as an "in-between state" suspended between possession and deprivation.

This mechanism helps explain the dynamics of value creation in practice. Identifying the point at which desire peaks requires maintaining a balance between excessive proximity and excessive distance. Moreover, the greater the lifestyle change, effort, or sacrifice required to obtain an object, the more valuable the resulting pleasure becomes. As Simmel emphasizes, it is precisely this sacrifice and difficulty that intensifies desire.

The Role of Money and the Modern Monetary Economy

According to Simmel (2017), money represents the measurable form of value. By quantifying everything, the modern monetary economy renders qualitatively different objects comparable (Posner, 2022). This process leads to the following consequences:

Calculability: Money renders objects expressible in terms of the question "how much?". In this way, mathematical precision extends into many areas of life-for example, in defining inequalities through monetary measures. Simmel

argues that through the calculability made possible by money, relationships between individuals and objects assume a more precise and structured form; yet at the same time, this process contributes to an emotional desensitization among individuals.

Blasé Attitude (Emotional Desensitization and Indifference): With the rise of urban life, money-based economic relations give way to a mode of existence that dulls perception. Simmel suggests that the urban individual gradually develops a blasé outlook in response to the rapid and continuous flow of stimuli characteristic of city life. He partly explains this condition through the abstraction generated by money in everyday life. The "colorlessness" of money and its reduction of all values to the question "how much?" level meaningful distinctions among things, turning them into shades of gray.

Transformation of Distances: While money overcomes certain distances, it simultaneously generates new ones. By facilitating economic relations across space, it transcends geographical boundaries; yet within this abstract system of measurement, it can also deepen the detachment of hearts and minds. Simmel's notion of the "calculative spirit" of money suggests that as physical distances diminish, internal and emotional distances tend to increase.

In conclusion, within the Simmelian conception of value, money functions both as a means of overcoming distance and as an instrument for reproducing it. In the modern economy, mechanisms such as price tags, interest rates that govern time, and credit obligations have complicated the dynamics of sacrifice and choice that Simmel describes. Nevertheless, the underlying logic remains unchanged: every additional burden introduces a new form of "distance" and, consequently, an additional layer of value.

Fashion, Luxury, and Distance in Consumer Culture

Fashion and luxury consumption practices exemplify the application of Simmel's theory of distance to consumer culture. According to Simmel, fashion reflects the tension between imitation (assimilation) and differentiation (distinction). A new fashion typically emerges within elite circles and is subsequently imitated by broader social groups. Once the masses adopt the trend and "eliminate the difference," elites move on in search of a new style. This cyclical process generates both a sense of belonging and a sense of exclusivity among groups. Simmel's analysis-suggesting that fashion simultaneously integrates members of a class while distinguishing them from others-helps explain consumers' ongoing search for new symbols (Simmel, 1957). Luxury consumption, in turn, closely aligns with Simmel's idea that distance enhances value through aesthetic and social elevation. Luxury objects usually require

a significant sacrifice, often in the form of a high price or access barrier. This sacrifice elevates the object's perceived value. Similarly, contemporary practices such as "limited editions" can be interpreted within a Simmelian framework as techniques of artificially creating scarcity. For example, a watch produced in limited quantities or a product available exclusively to VIP members introduces new social and economic distances that must be overcome. To the extent that these distances remain surmountable, desire intensifies; as they are maintained, a perception of exclusivity and "specialness" is sustained. Influencer culture extends a comparable dynamic into the present. As the consumption experiences of selectively privileged individuals circulate on social media, ordinary consumers encounter desired lifestyles from an increasing symbolic distance. Yet when this distance is partially reduced-through price reductions, campaigns, or broader accessibility-desire can surge dramatically. Overall, Simmel's (1957) perspective highlights a crucial insight regarding fashion and luxury: value derives less from the object's intrinsic appeal than from the total social, symbolic, and financial sacrifice required to obtain it.

Simmel's theses continue to resonate within contemporary marketing and consumption strategies. For example, waiting lists and pre-order systems function by temporarily restricting the accessibility of a new product in order to stimulate consumer desire. This can be interpreted as a practical application of Simmel's notion that desire requires the presence of an obstacle. Waiting itself increases the perceived value of a product (Barton et al., 2022).

Influencer and social media marketing similarly operate by constructing deliberate forms of distance. A product may initially be introduced exclusively by prominent influencers, creating excitement and anticipation before the broader public gains access. Subsequently, through limited sales strategies, consumers are offered the symbolic message: "you too have entered this class." In this way, desire is reinforced through managed accessibility. Such methods align closely with Simmel's account of the inherently restless and unsatisfied dynamics of desire within consumption. Likewise, Russell W. Belk and his colleagues, in The Fire of Desire (2003), observe that consumers respond passionately to elements of scarcity and inaccessibility. This can be viewed as a contemporary reflection of Simmelian theory within consumer sociology.

From a critical perspective, however, while Simmel's framework illuminates the cultural codes of desire, it may also risk overgeneralization. In today's digital environment, where a culture of instant gratification is increasingly dominant, Simmel's emphasis on the necessity of at least some obstacle may not always fully apply. Moreover, by situating desire primarily within economic relations

and inter-individual competition, Simmel may understate the role of subjective fulfillment and psychological variability. Nevertheless, the artificial scarcities and symbolic hierarchies characteristic of modern consumer practices can still be productively conceptualized through Simmel's comprehensive framework.

Desire and Scarcity in Belk and Colleagues

Russell W. Belk, Güliz Ger, and Søren Askegaard's 2003 article, "The Fire of Desire: A Multisited Inquiry into Consumer Passion," challenges the view that consumption can be adequately explained through models of need fulfillment or rational choice. Instead, the authors place consumer desire at the center of their analysis. They argue that desire constitutes a primary driving force of contemporary consumption, yet studies that directly address the passionate and imaginative dimensions of desire remain relatively limited within the consumer behavior literature. Within this framework, desire is conceptualized as embedded in everyday practices of longing and fantasy directed toward specific objects-products, experiences, identities, or forms of "otherness." In other words, desire is not merely oriented toward the goal of possession. Rather, it is intertwined with processes of self-construction, self-transformation, and the sensory and emotional ways in which individuals experience the world. What the authors describe as a phenomenological account seeks precisely to illuminate this domain of "lived desire." Crucially, what intensifies desire is often not proximity to the object but, on the contrary, distance, resistance, scarcity, or inaccessibility-together with the process of "self-seduction" sustained within that distance. Desire thus moves beyond being a condition that is fully and permanently satisfied through consumption. Instead, it is better understood as a cyclical and continuously reproduced "fire" that is rekindled rather than extinguished.

Belk and his colleagues (2003) do not attempt to measure desire as an abstract variable. Instead, they trace it within consumers' narratives, images, and everyday discourses. The study adopts a multisited research design conducted across three cultural contexts-the United States, Turkey, and Denmark. Drawing on journals, in-depth interviews, projective materials (such as collages and drawings), and analyses of everyday discourse, the authors approach desire as an experiential phenomenon that cannot be reduced to a single "market" or "culture." Rather, desire appears with varying intensities across local meaning systems and cultural settings. The phenomenological dimension of this design lies in the refusal to predefine what desire is and then fit participants' experiences into that framework. Instead, the researchers seek to describe and conceptualize how desire manifests in people's lives-through

feeling, imagining, postponing, struggling, restraining oneself, or deliberately stimulating longing. In this sense, the study aligns with the existential–phenomenological tradition in consumer research, which calls for rethinking consumption as lived experience rather than as a mere behavioral outcome. Accordingly, the findings are best understood not as linear causal claims (e.g., "scarcity produces X effect") but as a processual model in which the internal tensions of desire operate simultaneously. Pleasure and discomfort, hope and despair, seduction and morality, freedom and constraint are not treated as opposites that cancel each other out; rather, they co-constitute the dynamic and ambivalent structure of consumer desire.

How Is Desire Experienced? Cyclicality, Embodiment, and Pleasurable Discomfort

One of the authors' most compelling findings is that participants experience desire as a "powerful cyclical emotion that is both disturbing and pleasurable." Desire is described as an embodied and sensory passion-an intense force associated with otherness, sociality, danger, and inaccessibility. In other words, desire is directed not only toward an object but also toward a horizon of the self: becoming someone else, touching another life, crossing a threshold. It is as much about transformation as it is about acquisition. The notion of desire as "pleasurable discomfort" can also be traced within the authors' broader theoretical trajectory. In an earlier work, Belk and colleagues connect consumer desire to Colin Campbell's concept of the romantic ethic. They emphasize that desire itself generates pleasure, and that the state of wanting may become more central to enjoyment than the state of possessing. In this view, desire is described as a formation ignited by imagination and endlessly renewable. Market dynamism, accordingly, is said to rely less on fulfilling desire than on continuously recreating it. Desire, therefore, is better understood as a process rather than an outcome. As the subject approaches-or fails to approach-the desired object, a sensory and imaginative intensity emerges. When possession is finally achieved, the cycle of desire can begin anew. Referring to Colin Campbell's model of anticipation–consummation–disappointment–renewed desire, the article explores how this cyclical structure of desire is experienced across cultures and under varying socioeconomic conditions. Within this framework, the metaphor of "fire" becomes especially significant. Fire both warms and burns; it generates vitality while also producing unrest. Consequently, desire should not be reduced to a mere lack awaiting satisfaction. At times, it functions as a regime of vitality that individuals actively seek to sustain. Indeed, as the article suggests, the absence of desire may provoke a profound sense of emptiness-extending even to a fear of desirelessness itself.

Scarcity, Inaccessibility, and Distance: The Theoretical Bridge to Georg Simmel

Belk and colleagues explicitly ground the theme of scarcity and inaccessibility in their discussion of desire through Georg Simmel's theory of value. They emphasize that as the perceived scarcity or inaccessibility of the desired object increases, the intensity of desire may also deepen. The object's distance and resistance sharpen longing rather than weaken it. Citing Simmel, the authors describe the state of desire as one in which the subject's mind becomes "immersed" in the object, blurring the opposition between subject and object. This depiction reinforces the idea that desire is not merely a cognitive evaluation but a powerful mode of orientation and absorption. At this point, distance should not be understood solely as physical separation. Rather, it constitutes a field of resistance produced by social, economic, or moral barriers. In the article, participants distinguish desire from ordinary "want" by using expressions such as "distant," "very distant," "difficult," or "requiring significant effort." These linguistic markers position distance at the core of the definition of desire.

As reflected in Arjun Appadurai's introductory discussion in The Social Life of Things, Simmel conceives value not as an intrinsic property of objects but as a judgment conferred by subjects. More critically, objects are not difficult to obtain because they are valuable; rather, they are considered valuable because they resist our desire. This inversion provides a powerful explanation for why scarcity and inaccessibility can intensify longing: resistance supplies the "surface of tension" upon which desire can attach and sustain itself. A particularly subtle yet decisive point in Simmel's argument concerns the extinction of desire under conditions of total impossibility. As Andrzej Karalus (2018) notes in his interpretation of Simmel, distance occupies an intermediate position between two extremes: at one end lies absolute rarity or the impossibility of fulfillment; at the other, unlimited accessibility. Value and desire may grow as distance increases, but this distance must remain at least logically surmountable. If the object is entirely unattainable, desire becomes futile and eventually fades. This thesis resonates with Belk and colleagues' finding regarding the "glimmer of hope": desire lives within conquerable distance.

In Georg Simmel's 1900 work, the discussion of scarcity is refined further. What ultimately constitutes value, he argues, is not mere numerical scarcity but the difficulty of attainment and the sacrifice or cost that such difficulty imposes. Scarcity, in this sense, appears as the outward expression of a more fundamental process: value emerges through effort, delay, and renunciation.

This argument can be directly applied to consumer desire, helping to explain why investments of labor, time, patience, and sacrifice often intensify longing rather than diminish it. Belk and colleagues (2003) likewise demonstrate that desire is less a spontaneously arising energy than a mechanism actively sustained by the subject. Desire involves what they call self-seductive imagination and the active cultivation of longing. It is preserved and nurtured until the object is attained or until the subject recognizes that no hope remains. Importantly, this notion of self-seduction challenges simplistic accounts in which advertising merely manipulates passive consumers. Instead, consumers themselves participate in maintaining and amplifying desire. Media images, niche magazines, and broader repertoires of cultural representation assist individuals in identifying what to desire-and even in generating entirely new objects of longing. As a result, desire becomes a rich experiential domain long before actual consumption occurs, unfolding primarily in the sphere of imagination. At the center of this mechanism lies hope. Belk and colleagues argue that when the possibility of obtaining the desired object is perceived as zero, desire dissipates into mere wishfulness or unattainable fantasy. Even if the object remains attractive, desires unattached to hope lose their vitality. Conversely, desires sustained by hope-uncertain yet possible outcomes-tend to be more durable and emotionally intense. Not only impossibility but also certainty alters the structure of desire. Hope is distinct from the expectation of a guaranteed result; it is oriented toward what is indeterminate yet attainable. In this intermediate space, desire retains its affective force and continuity.

The conceptual distinction between hope and related constructs in the consumer behavior literature is clarified most explicitly in the work of Deborah J. MacInnis and Gustavo E. de Mello. They define hope as an emotion directed toward a goal-consistent positive outcome that is perceived as uncertain but possible. Outcomes that are certain do not generate hope. Moreover, hope differs from expectation: whereas expectations operate at the level of belief and probability assessment, hope is affective in nature and may rest not on likelihood but on an evaluation of possibility. In other words, hope does not require strong evidence that an outcome will occur; it requires only that the outcome remains within the realm of the conceivable. In Belk and colleagues' (2003) field findings, hope appears not as a passive "good feeling" but as an activating force. Participants attempt to reduce the distance separating them from their desired objects through concrete practices: earning and saving money, allocating time, sacrificing alternative pursuits, persuading those who may stand in their way, preparing in advance, exercising patience, and-depending on the cultural context-seeking to "deserve" the object. Through these efforts, hope becomes a motivational energy that propels action. Desire,

therefore, is not merely a response to an external call issued by the object. It becomes integrated into the subject's broader life project. The individual does not simply wait for desire to be fulfilled; rather, they actively participate in making it possible. In this configuration, desire is sustained at the intersection of distance and effort-anchored by hope, animated by imagination, and embedded within everyday practices of self-formation.

At this point, it is important to note that the effect of constraints or barriers on desire does not operate in a strictly linear manner. In social psychology, psychological reactance theory posits that when individuals perceive a threat to their freedom, they may develop a stronger orientation toward the restricted or prohibited option in an attempt to restore that freedom. Reactance is thus defined as a motivational state aimed at reclaiming autonomy, and its implications have been widely discussed across various fields, including marketing. However, when a barrier is perceived as entirely insurmountable, both reactance and desire may weaken rather than intensify. In such cases, frustration can emerge instead of heightened attraction. Experimental studies examining different levels of scarcity and accessibility support this nuance: a product that is perceived as completely unattainable is not always evaluated as more valuable. In certain scenarios, the assumption that inaccessibility automatically increases perceived value has been rejected, with the effect explained through frustration rather than desire amplification. This finding resonates with Belk and colleagues' (2003) argument that desire diminishes when hope disappears. If the possibility of attainment collapses entirely, the motivational and affective energy sustaining desire tends to dissipate. Thus, both the reactance literature and the phenomenological account of consumer desire converge on a similar principle: desire thrives under conditions of threatened yet recoverable freedom, but it falters under conditions of absolute impossibility.

In Belk and colleagues' (2003) study, themes of distance and inaccessibility appear across all three field sites; however, the "tone" of distance varies culturally. The authors note that perceived distance tends to be more pronounced among Turkish participants and comparatively lower among American participants. In particular, some lower-income Turkish participants describe their desires as muted or constrained because they perceive "no hope" of attaining the desired object. The implication is clear: scarcity or obstacles can generate desire, but only insofar as they appear surmountable enough to sustain hope. The study offers concrete materials demonstrating how the language and imagery of desire are culturally embedded. In projective exercises, for example, the path toward the desired object is depicted as requiring the crossing of "mountains." Family objections, financial barriers, labor, and

sacrifice function as elements that construct a distance between the consumer and the object of desire. Desire, in this sense, is narratively framed as an act of "opening a passage" or overcoming thresholds. The metaphor of "unreachable mountains" aligns directly with these projective findings. At the same time, cultural differences extend beyond the degree of perceived distance. They also shape the forms of "otherness" toward which desire is directed. The article suggests that for some Turkish participants, desire may be linked to the horizon of a more radical transformation-a completely new life or self. By contrast, Danish and American participants sometimes articulate desire in terms of an alternative life grounded in nature or simplicity. This distinction indicates that desire operates not only in relation to objects but also in relation to lifestyle ideals and imagined modes of being.

These findings lead to two critical implications for marketing and consumer culture. First, scarcity and inaccessibility strategies-such as limited editions, time restrictions, or "low stock" messages-can often enhance perceived value and desirability. In his meta-analytic review within the commodity theory tradition, Michael Lynn demonstrates that scarcity, and more broadly unavailability, may increase perceived value and attractiveness. However, this effect operates within a horizon of attainability: if an object becomes entirely unattainable, it may cease to function as a "commodity" in the meaningful sense. Scarcity intensifies desire only insofar as the object remains within the realm of possible acquisition. Second, the impact of scarcity strategies is neither uniform nor universal. Their effectiveness varies according to type and context. A meta-analysis published in the Journal of Retailing emphasizes that the influence of scarcity cues on purchase intention depends on several factors, including whether scarcity is demand-based or supply-based, whether it is time-limited, and the nature of the product itself (e.g., experiential vs. utilitarian; high vs. low involvement). These moderating conditions align closely with Belk and colleagues' distinction: desire diminishes under total impossibility but may be sustained-and even intensified-by difficulty accompanied by hope. Scarcity, therefore, is not merely "less quantity." It operates as a mechanism intertwined with hope, representation, and social meaning.

Belk and colleagues' narrative ultimately invites us to reconceptualize desire not as a simple precondition of consumption-a drive that leads to purchase-but as an experiential field in its own right. Desire persists within tensions between pleasure and discomfort, attraction and resistance, hope and uncertainty. When these tensions disappear-when the object becomes either fully accessible or entirely hopeless-desire transforms or fades. In this respect, the metaphor of the "fire of desire" encapsulates one of the article's most productive insights: the true fuel of desire is often not the object itself but the sustained act of imagining

it. In the Turkish case, the imagery of "insurmountable mountains" converges with Simmel's theory of value and distance, reinforcing a key principle: desire is produced within surmountable distance. It does not dissolve into banality under complete proximity, nor does it collapse into despair under absolute impossibility. It lives-and is continually regenerated-in the space between.

Marketing and Scarcity: Limited-Time and Limited-Quantity Practices

The marketing literature identifies numerous practices that operationalize the elements of distance and resistance emphasized by Simmel and later elaborated by Belk. Referred to as scarcity tactics, these strategies communicate that a product or offer is limited in availability. By signaling restriction-whether temporal or numerical-they construct a perceived gap between the consumer and the desired object, thereby intensifying motivational engagement. Robert Cialdini's (2023) work on the psychology of persuasion underscores two related principles: first, that opportunities appear more valuable when they are scarce; and second, that when our freedom of access is restricted, our desire for the restricted option tends to increase. Within this framework, items that are difficult to obtain are often perceived as superior, not solely because of their intrinsic qualities but because restriction elevates their perceived worth. Scarcity, in this sense, can trigger psychological reactance-a motivational response aimed at restoring threatened freedom-which may amplify attraction toward the limited option. Thus, in practical marketing applications, scarcity operates not merely as a supply condition but as a psychological mechanism. By introducing resistance into the acquisition process, marketers replicate the structural dynamic identified by Simmel and phenomenologically described by Belk: value and desire intensify when access is constrained yet still possible.

Scarcity Promotions and Their Effects

Research indicates that limited-time and limited-quantity promotions exert a strong influence on consumer behavior. In a study conducted by Shi and Chumnumpan (2020), product scarcity is shown to be created either through temporal restrictions or quantity limitations. Their findings suggest that limited-time offers reduce consumers' information-processing capacity, thereby accelerating decision-making. Under time pressure, consumers are more likely to rely on simplified heuristics and emotional responses rather than extensive evaluation. The study further demonstrates that limited-quantity messages tend to be more effective for symbolic and conspicuous brands, where exclusivity enhances perceived status and uniqueness. In contrast,

limited-time messages may be more effective for less conspicuous or more utilitarian products, where urgency rather than exclusivity drives action. These strategies-commonly referred to as scarcity promotions-frequently frame discounted products with restrictions on time or quantity, creating a "buy now or miss out" effect. A separate study conducted by researchers at Bilkent University reports that both limited-time and limited-quantity promotions increase consumers' arousal levels, which in turn heightens impulsive purchase intentions. The time pressure associated with scarcity cues encourages affect-based decision-making, often generating sentiments such as "buying now is advantageous." The same research notes that for low-priced products, limited-time and limited-quantity strategies produce similar outcomes, although limited-quantity messages may, in some cases, exert a stronger effect. Taken together, these findings suggest that scarcity promotions do not operate uniformly across contexts. Their impact depends on product category, price level, and symbolic value. Accordingly, marketers must carefully align the type of scarcity strategy-temporal or numerical-with the characteristics of the product and the psychological drivers of the target audience.

In addition to these empirical findings, contemporary digital marketing research highlights the psychological mechanisms underlying scarcity tactics. According to Mindy Weinstein (2025), scarcity activates consumers' fear of missing out (FOMO). Limited-time and limited-quantity messages generate the perception that one's freedom of access is being restricted, thereby encouraging faster decision-making. In this sense, scarcity operates less as a logistical constraint and more as an affective trigger that accelerates consumer response.

Weinstein identifies four primary forms of scarcity commonly employed in digital environments:

- Supply-based scarcity, stemming from natural or intentionally restricted production;
- Demand-based scarcity, resulting from rapid depletion due to high consumer demand;
- Time-based scarcity, such as flash sales and seasonal offerings;
- Limited-edition scarcity, involving special or exclusive versions of products.

These scarcity cues are said to activate neural regions associated with value processing, leading consumers to perceive objects as more valuable. Simultaneously, scarcity prompts the use of cognitive heuristics in decision-making. Rather than engaging in comprehensive evaluation, individuals rely on mental shortcuts driven by anticipated loss or opportunity cost. The urgency

associated with potential loss encourages rapid, emotion-based decisions. FOMO, in particular, appears especially influential among younger consumers. While older consumers may rely more heavily on established brand loyalty, younger consumers are often more responsive to social proof and restricted opportunities. Scarcity messaging-especially when embedded in digital interfaces featuring countdown timers, real-time purchase notifications, or limited stock alerts-leverages this heightened sensitivity to social validation and temporal urgency. Taken together, these insights suggest that digital scarcity tactics function through a convergence of affect (FOMO), cognitive shortcutting, and perceived freedom restriction. Their effectiveness, however, varies across demographic groups and depends on how scarcity is framed and contextualized within the broader consumption environment.

The Overall Effect of Scarcity Tactics

Aggarwal and colleagues (2011) assess the overall impact of scarcity tactics on consumer purchase intentions. Their findings confirm that scarcity cues increase perceived value and product attractiveness, thereby enhancing consumers' willingness to buy. The study further identifies three primary sources of scarcity:

- Demand-based scarcity, resulting from high consumer demand;
- Supply-based scarcity, stemming from limited production or controlled distribution;
- Time-based scarcity, created through temporal restrictions such as limited-time offers.

Importantly, the effectiveness of these forms of scarcity varies across product categories. For example, time-based scarcity appears to be more effective for high-involvement products, where consumers invest greater cognitive and emotional effort in the decision process. In such cases, temporal restriction intensifies urgency without undermining perceived product significance. However, the impact of scarcity promotions is also context-dependent. Drawing on the 5P framework of the marketing mix (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People), Inman, Peter, and Raghubir (1997) argue that scarcity tactics may function differently across retail environments. In online settings, for instance, countdown timers and other time-based scarcity signals may have diminished effectiveness due to consumers' repeated exposure to such cues. Moreover, pandemic-related supply chain disruptions have altered consumer interpretations of limited-quantity messages; when scarcity becomes a widespread structural condition rather than a strategic signal, its persuasive impact may weaken.

Supporting this cautionary view, Roux et al. (2023) suggest that excessive use of scarcity tactics can reduce consumer sensitivity to restriction cues and erode trust in promotional messaging. When scarcity becomes routine or perceived as manipulative, consumers may discount its signal value or respond with skepticism. Taken together, these findings indicate that scarcity tactics are powerful but not universally effective. Their influence depends on product type, involvement level, market conditions, and consumer trust. Overuse or contextual misalignment may attenuate their impact, underscoring the importance of strategic calibration in applying scarcity-based promotions.

Advertising Discourses and Scarcity

Phrases frequently encountered in advertisements-such as "limited hours," "only three left," "last day," or "final discount day"-translate the distance–desire relationship articulated by Simmel and later elaborated by Belk into practical marketing discourse. These expressions foreground the temporal or quantitative distance between the consumer and the object. Rather than merely informing the audience about availability, they construct a narrowing gap that intensifies motivational pressure. From a theoretical perspective, such messages do not simply announce restriction; they dramatize it. By emphasizing that access is shrinking-whether in time or quantity-advertising discourse activates the structural condition of surmountable distance. The object remains attainable, yet not indefinitely so. This carefully calibrated tension mirrors the logic described by Simmel: value and desire are sustained when resistance exists but does not foreclose possibility. In this sense, statements like "last chance" or "only a few remaining" operate as symbolic markers of diminishing opportunity. They compress time, accelerate decision-making, and reframe hesitation as potential loss. The consumer is positioned at a threshold, where action becomes a means of overcoming distance. Thus, advertising language materializes scarcity not only as an economic condition but as a rhetorical device that converts limitation into intensified desire.

"Limited hours" / "last day" – Time-based scarcity: Time-based scarcity emphasizes the remaining duration available for decision-making. In Simmel's perspective, the sense of value emerges through delay-the temporal distance and effort involved in attaining the object. Advertising, however, strategically reverses this delay by compressing time into a narrow decision window. By doing so, it generates a "now or never" condition that reframes hesitation as potential loss. Rather than allowing desire to unfold gradually, time restrictions intensify it by introducing temporal resistance. The consumer becomes aware that access is still possible, yet rapidly diminishing. In this way, the discourse of

"limited hours" injects urgency into the desire structure, heightening attention and accelerating action. The object remains attainable, but only within a shrinking timeframe-thereby intensifying motivational energy and focusing the consumer's interest.

"Only three left" / "last items available" – Quantity-based scarcity: Quantity-based scarcity communicates that the number of remaining units is limited. This strategy aligns directly with Simmel's proposition that resistance intensifies desire: when access to an object appears restricted, its perceived value increases. The limited number of available units introduces a competitive dimension, positioning the object as something that must be secured before others obtain it. Meta-analytical evidence further suggests that limited-quantity messages are particularly effective for conspicuous and symbolic brands, where exclusivity reinforces social distinction. In such contexts, scarcity enhances not only perceived value but also status signaling. Statements such as "only three left" generate a sense of urgency and competition, activating the psychological dynamic described by Cialdini (2023): rare opportunities appear more attractive. Thus, quantity-based scarcity operates by transforming numerical limitation into heightened desirability and intensified consumer motivation.

"Last discount day" / "final discount hours" – Scarcity combined with price incentives: When discount messaging is presented alongside scarcity cues, both value perception and fear of missing out are activated simultaneously. The product is framed as economically advantageous, yet temporally fragile. This dual framing intensifies motivational pressure by merging opportunity with urgency. Belk and colleagues emphasize that distance and access barriers sustain the cycle of desire. In promotional practice, marketers strategically construct this distance through temporal restriction layered onto price reduction. The object is rendered both attractive (through economic benefit) and endangered (through limited availability), producing a tension between gain and potential loss. As a result, consumers experience not only heightened desire but also anticipatory regret: the fear that failing to act will mean losing both value and opportunity. In this configuration, scarcity does not merely signal limitation; it orchestrates a compressed field of possibility in which desire and loss anxiety coexist, accelerating the decision to purchase.

These discursive strategies simultaneously generate FOMO (fear of missing out). The persuasive power of scarcity tactics lies partly in their ability to shorten rational deliberation and encourage fast, emotionally driven decisions. By compressing time and signaling threatened opportunity, scarcity cues reduce cognitive evaluation and amplify affective urgency. Some studies suggest

that this accelerated decision mode may also produce negative outcomes, including post-purchase regret or even aggressive competitive responses in high-demand situations. Scarcity and inaccessibility constructed through advertising discourse also operate beyond desire itself; they intersect with consumers' pursuit of status and identity. Thorstein Veblen's (1899) concept of conspicuous consumption posits that individuals purchase expensive and non-essential goods to display wealth and social standing. In this framework, consumption becomes a public performance of status rather than a mere satisfaction of need. Advertising phrases such as "limited-edition luxury watch" or "collector's series" function on two levels: they create distance through scarcity while simultaneously emphasizing the prestige associated with ownership. In doing so, advertising discourse establishes a conceptual bridge between Simmel's theory of distance and resistance, Belk's cyclical dynamics of desire, and Veblen's analysis of status display (Bergman, 2010).

In digital environments, contemporary scarcity messaging becomes further intertwined with psychological reactance and FOMO. As Mindy Weinstein (2025) observes, statements such as "only a few left" or "ending in hours" create the impression that decision-making freedom is narrowing, prompting impulsive purchasing behavior. These strategies draw on the behavioral insight that the fear of loss often outweighs the appeal of equivalent gain. Here, Simmel's concept of distance is reconfigured through temporal and access barriers, while Belk's "fire of desire" is ignited through an internal struggle framed as "buy now or lose forever." However, excessive reliance on scarcity messaging may weaken its effectiveness. As Roux and colleagues (2023) argue, repeated exposure to artificial urgency cues can desensitize consumers and undermine trust in promotional claims. When scarcity becomes perceived as manipulative or habitual rather than authentic, its capacity to generate value, desire, and credibility diminishes.

Conclusion and Evaluation

Scarcity and inaccessibility play a pivotal role in shaping consumer desire, both theoretically and practically. From Georg Simmel's perspective, the value of an object emerges through the relationship of distance and resistance between subject and object. An object that is accessible yet requires effort, patience, or sacrifice intensifies both desire and perceived value. In this respect, advertising phrases such as "limited time" or "last items available" function as mechanisms that reduce perceived proximity while increasing motivational tension. By strategically emphasizing restriction, marketing practices make the product appear less immediately attainable, thereby amplifying desire. In

practical applications, limited-time and limited-quantity promotions highlight the distance between consumer and product, triggering both desire and purchase intention. For example, a product produced in limited numbers may stimulate stronger longing through fear of missing out. Empirical research supports the claim that such scarcity tactics increase perceived value and purchasing propensity. However, the overuse of these strategies can have unintended consequences. Frequent or seemingly artificial scarcity claims may generate distraction, skepticism, or diminished trust. When consumers repeatedly encounter exaggerated urgency cues-such as "limited hours" or "running out of stock"-the persuasive impact of such messages may weaken, potentially undermining brand credibility. From a Simmelian standpoint, these expressions operate as typical techniques for inflaming desire by presenting the product as difficult to attain. Yet, as Simmel emphasizes, the meaningful fulfillment of desire depends on the surmountability of distance. If the perceived gap becomes either trivial or insurmountable, the dynamic of desire shifts or dissipates entirely. Scarcity strategies thus carry a dual effect within consumer culture. On one hand, they accelerate sales and stimulate short-term engagement. On the other, they may sustain consumers in an ongoing cycle of renewed longing, contributing to persistent dissatisfaction. Applying the framework developed by Simmel and Belk encourages a more critical evaluation of advertising campaigns-not merely as tools of persuasion, but as mechanisms that shape experiential and symbolic economies of desire.

Ultimately, Simmel's theory of value and desire remains highly relevant to contemporary consumption practices. The role of scarcity and inaccessibility in generating desire is supported both conceptually and empirically. Nevertheless, the continuous deployment of scarcity tactics warrants scrutiny. When desire-stimulating techniques fail to deliver lasting satisfaction, disappointment may follow. For this reason, assessments of value-creation practices within consumer culture should attend not only to economic effectiveness but also to ethical considerations, consumer trust, and broader social well-being.

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CHAPTER 2

Türkiye's Digital Transformation Scorecard (2024): An Analysis of Social Media, E-Commerce, and E-Government Usage Dynamics from a Demographic Perspective

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to present the analysis of the level of digital transformation in Turkey as of 2024 in terms of internet usage, social media, electronic commerce, and electronic government usage. The research is based on the data collected from the 2024 survey carried out by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) on household information and communication technology (ICT) usage. The research findings show that internet usage has become widespread in Turkey, and the digital divide exists in terms of age and gender variables for electronic government and electronic commerce usage. The conclusion is that the digital transformation policies should not only focus on the issue of digital access but also put more emphasis on the issue of digital skills in order for the digital transformation process to be more inclusive. The issue of the digital divide has become a critical issue in the information age, and countries have begun to take steps to overcome the problem in order for the digital transformation process to be more inclusive.

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Keywords: Digital transformation, Digital divide, E-government, E-commerce, Social media, Türkiye

1. Introduction

Over the last few years, digital technologies have caused important changes in the economic, political, and cultural aspects of society. The expansion of the internet, the integration of mobile technologies into society, and the transfer of public services into digital environments have made the process of digital transformation go beyond its technical and innovative dimension, transforming into a multidimensional process that changes society. With these changes, the ways in which people receive information, communicate, consume, and interact with the state have changed considerably.

With the rapid development of digital transformation, it has been suggested that with the increased use of digital technology, social inequality would decrease. However, research on this topic in recent years has shown that, in reality, digital transformation does not necessarily ensure that social inequality is reduced but that a new inequality could also emerge based on variables such as age, gender, education, and socioeconomic status. With these developments, the topic of the digital divide, which has been explored in many studies, not only encompasses access to technology but also a complex concept that encompasses how, for what purpose, and to what extent these technologies are used.

In Türkiye, the speed of digital transformation has increased substantially over the past decade. Much progress has been made in the area of e-government service development, the growth of online public services, and investments in the development of digital infrastructure. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, there has been a steady rise in the rate of internet usage. However, this does not necessarily mean that all social strata are utilizing and benefiting from digital services equally. The findings made regarding the lower rate of participation of older age groups and women are quite remarkable.

The proposed study is intended to investigate the extent of digital transformation in Türkiye as of 2024. For this purpose, a thorough analysis of internet, social media, e-commerce, and e-government usage will be carried out. The proposed study will also investigate the inclusiveness of the digital transformation process. Therefore, the proposed study is intended to provide an updated and accurate assessment of the digital transformation performance of Türkiye, on the basis of the most recent and authentic information. .

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Digital transformation can be viewed as the restructuration of social, economic, political, and communicative systems by the diffusion and institutionalization of information and communication technologies (ICTs). In the area of communication studies, digital transformation is not merely viewed as a process of technological innovation but as the restructuration of communication ecologies, symbolic production, and power relations. As conceptualized in Castells' (2010) theory of the network society, modern societies can be viewed as being restructured around digital networks where information flows can be viewed as the primary sources of power and productivity. Therefore, in this sense, digital transformation can be viewed as a restructuration of the very structure of communication itself, including its effects on individuals' access to information, civic engagement in public discourse, and social identity formations.

From a sociotechnical perspective, digital technologies can be seen as being embedded in broader institutional, cultural, and economic structures (Bijker et al., 2012). Thus, digital transformation can be seen as going beyond infrastructural expansion into reconfiguring individuals' patterns of everyday communication, civic engagement, and patterns of mediated interaction. The digitalization of public services, the emergence of social media platforms, and the expansion of platform economies can be seen as reconfiguring individuals' private and public communication spaces.

2.1. The Digital Divide as a Multilevel Inequality

One of the most influential conceptual frameworks for understanding digital transformation is that of digital divide. Early studies on digital divide emphasized physical inequality in terms of access to digital technology (Norris, 2001). However, later studies indicated that access alone is insufficient for digital participation.

Digital divide has been conceptualized by Van Dijk (2020) as a multi-layered concept comprising three dimensions: inequality in access, inequality in digital skill, and inequality in outcomes of digital technology. Another key aspect emphasized by Hargittai (2002) is inequality in digital skill, which is one of the most influential dimensions for digital participation. Another key aspect emphasized by Helsper (2021) is that digital inequality is a reflection of inequality in society as a whole.

The multi-dimensional concept of digital divide is highly influential for communication studies because digital participation is not only about being

connected but also about being visible, audible, and capable of strategic engagement in networked publics. Thus, digital inequality is a communicative inequality.

2.2. Digital Capital and Social Stratification

Bourdieu's (1986) theory of capital is an appropriate approach for conceptualizing the phenomenon of digital inequality. Cultural capital, social capital, and economic capital are interlinked and play an important role in influencing individuals' capabilities to convert their capital into effective participation. Therefore, it is possible to talk about "digital capital" in terms of individuals' digital competencies and skills.

It is possible to argue that individuals with high levels of educational and economic capital are more likely to use digital technologies for information-seeking, career-enhancing, and civic-engagement purposes, whereas individuals with lower levels of capital are more likely to use digital technologies for less extensive and more entertainment-oriented purposes. This consideration is consistent with van Deursen and van Dijk's (2019) argument that the nature of digital inequality has changed from access-based inequality to skill- and outcome-based inequality.

This consideration indicates that the process of digital transformation does not inevitably lead to equality; on the contrary, inequality is likely to be reproduced if it is accompanied by specific policy interventions (Selwyn, 2016).

2.3. Platformization and Networked Publics

Social media and online platforms constitute an important site of communicative practice in the contemporary world. The site of communicative practice in social media and online platforms has been conceptualized by Boyd (2014) as "networked publics" where "visibility, persistence, and scalability" refigure the site of interpersonal and collective interaction. However, such interaction and engagement in social media and online platforms occur through asymmetrical structures of power determined by algorithmic governance and data extraction.

As Van Dijck, Poell, and de Waal (2018) explain, such a structure of power and interaction is determined by the "platformization" of social, economic, and political life where digital platforms penetrate and refigure social and economic structures. In such a structure of platform capitalism (Srnicek, 2017), communicative practice gets embedded with commercial infrastructure and the exploitation of user data and attention. Thus, digital transformation signifies

not only communicative possibility but also a new structure of dependence and inequality.

From a perspective of the public sphere, digital platforms constitute a site of possibility and constraint for communicative democracy. In such a perspective, digital transformation refigures the communicative site of citizenship.

2.4. Digital Citizenship and E-Government

Digital transformation also has an impact on the relationship between citizens and the state. E-government services have been advanced as a means of improving transparency, efficiency, and participation of citizens. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2022, 2024), there is a considerable potential for building stronger digital citizenship with the help of digital government initiatives. However, this is not equally realized among different social groups.

The generation gap is another dimension of the digital divide. Although the earlier discussion of "digital natives" and "digital immigrants" (Prensky, 2001), and the simplistic distinction between the two, have been subject to criticism, there is clear evidence of difficulties for older people in using technology due to a lack of digital literacy (Friemel, 2016).

2.5. Gender and Communicative Inequality

Gender represents another important factor of digital inequality. In this case, existing research indicates that, though the gap in terms of access between the two genders has reduced, there exists a disparity in terms of digital skills and civic engagement (Wajcman, 2010). From a communication point of view, gender shapes the way women and men participate and are represented in digital publics.

Consequently, digital transformation engages pre-existing gender norms and power balances. The continued presence of gender-based digital inequality indicates that technological development and dissemination do not necessarily address inequality.

2.6. Integrating the Framework

Based on the theories of the network society, digital divide studies, capital theory, platform studies, and digital citizenship studies, this research conceptualizes digital transformation as a communicative restructuring process with multiple dimensions. Instead of conceptualizing digital transformation

as a technological transfer process, this conceptualization focuses on access, skills, outcomes, and participation as dimensions of communicative inequality.

This research focuses on digital participation by age and gender in Türkiye and positions the empirical findings within the debates on networked communication, platformization, and digital citizenship. In this way, it provides a theoretically informed evaluation of the inclusiveness and depth of digital transformation in the Turkish context.

3. Method

This section provides a detailed explanation of the research design, data source, sample, variables, and analysis. The research design framework has been developed in accordance with the objectives of the research and is based on descriptive and comparative research design.

The research is based on a quantitative research approach using secondary data analysis. The research is consistent with the objectives of measuring the level of digital transformation in Türkiye until 2024 and analyzing the differences of digital participation based on demographic characteristics. The research is based on official statistical data. The descriptive part of the research is based on presenting the current trends of internet, social media, e-commerce, and e-government use, and the comparative part of the research is based on analyzing the differences among age and gender groups.

The main source of the research is based on using updated secondary data sets published officially. The data sets provide data on the use of digital technologies and demographic characteristics on a national level. Since the research is based on conducting secondary data analysis from national data sets, no data collection process is conducted by the researcher.

The sample of the study represents the population surveyed in the official statistical surveys that are relevant to the study. The variables that are considered in the study are internet use, social networks, electronic commerce, and the use of e-government, as well as demographic variables such as age and gender.

The analysis is descriptive, and it is based on the systematic comparison of the relevant statistical data. Moreover, demographic variables are employed for the identification of differences, in accordance with the context of the theoretical approach of the digital divide.

3.1. Ethical Considerations

This research is purely based on secondary data that has been collected from official statistical sources available to the public. The data collected is anonymized and aggregated and does not contain any personally identifiable information. Since this research does not involve direct contact with human subjects or the use of sensitive data, it does not require approval from an institutional ethics committee as per research ethics guidelines.

3.2. Research Design

This study is a quantitative study that aspires to present the current state of affairs regarding digital transformation in Türkiye. Rather than exploring causal relationships, this study aspires to visualize levels of use of digital technology and differences between demographic groups. As such, a descriptive and comparative research approach has been adopted for this study. As such, this study aspires to provide a snapshot of digital participation.

3.3. Data Source and Sample

The data source for the research is based on a survey conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT), referred to as the Household Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Usage Survey. In order for the information used for the research to be up-to-date, data for 2024 has been used. However, if need be, a comparison with data for 2023 has been made for a better understanding of the concept of digital transformation.

The population for the study includes individuals aged 16-74 years who are resident in Türkiye. The sampling method for the data used for the study is based on a method by TURKSTAT, which ensures representativeness at a national level. Therefore, it can be said that the data used for the study is reliable.

3.4. Variables

The study has employed a number of variables, specifically in relation to the different aspects of digital transformation. Dependent variables are those that are related to the level of digital technology used by individuals. These variables are internet usage, usage of social media/messaging, usage of e-government, usage of electronic commerce, preference for purchasing digital devices, and usage of internet devices.

Independent variables are age and gender, which are usually given prominence in literature as the most important factors in relation to digital participation.

3.5. Data Analysis

The analysis of the data utilized descriptive statistics. By means of frequency and percentage distributions, the levels of digital technology use were described, and comparisons were made among age and gender groups. In the interpretation of the results, attention was focused not only on the numbers but also on the larger trends of use.

Advanced statistical analyses were not employed within the context of this study. Rather, in keeping with the aims of the study, an explanatory framework was presented to describe the present situation of digital transformation. This method enables the results to be further developed in future studies by means of causal and multivariate analyses.

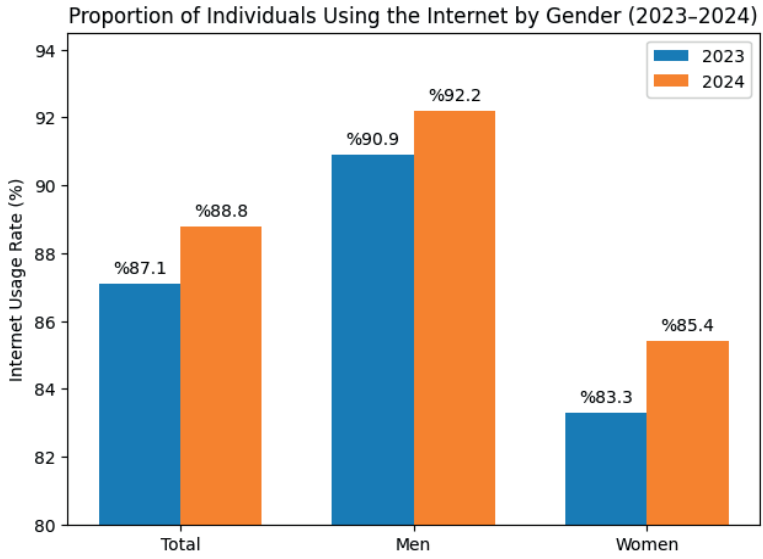
4. Findings

In this part, the findings obtained through the results of the "Household Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Usage Survey for the year 2024," which was published by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT), are discussed. The findings are discussed under the following headings: internet usage, social media and messaging app usage, usage of e-government services, e-commerce, ownership of digital devices, and the usage of internet-enabled devices, in order to highlight the different aspects of the digital transformation.

In the analysis, age and gender are used as the main demographic factors in order to understand the possible differences within the context of the digital divide.

4.1. Internet Usage

Table 1. Proportion of Individuals Using the Internet by Gender (2023–2024)



Source: TURKSTAT, Household Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Usage Survey, 2024.

As of 2024, the internet usage rate in Türkiye has reached 88.8% (see Table 1), indicating a high level of digital diffusion at the societal level. A comparison of the 2023 and 2024 data reveals that internet usage increased for both genders. In 2024, the usage rate among men reached 92.2%, while the rate among women was recorded at 85.4%.

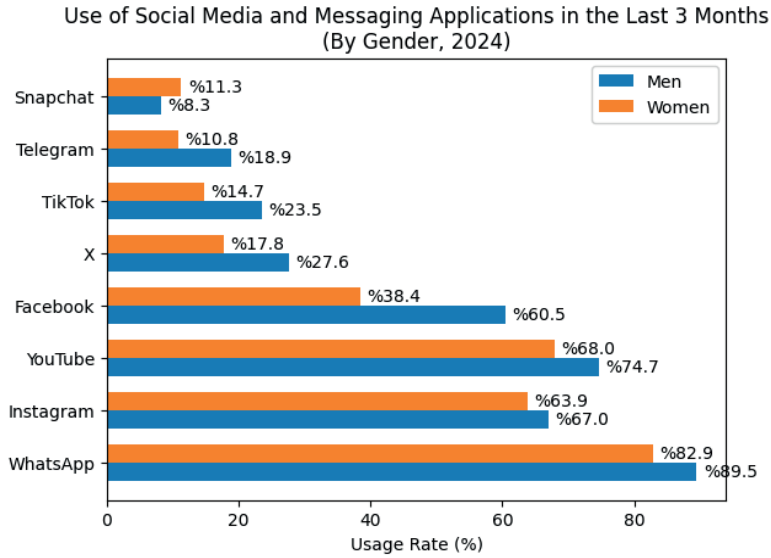
While the total increase indicates that first-level digital divide issues pertaining to access have been overcome to a great extent (Norris, 2001), the fact that a gender gap still exists indicates that the issue of digital inequality has not been completely addressed. The increase in the percentage of women using the internet from 83.3% to 85.4% indicates that the quantitative gender gap has narrowed to some extent, but the fact that it still exists indicates that access is not the only factor that determines digital equality. This is in line with van Dijk's (2020) theory that digital inequalities are no longer confined to the level of access but are more likely to be found at the levels of skills and usage.

From a broader perspective, the persistence of gender-based inequality reinforces Wajcman's (2010) point that the spread of technology does not necessarily lead to the elimination of structural inequalities embedded in social and cultural contexts. Although the extension of infrastructure has made

possible the widespread interconnectedness necessary to speak of a network society (Castells, 2010), communicative empowerment is still unequally distributed. Accordingly, the present findings suggest that the digital revolution in Türkiye has made significant progress in terms of quantity but still suffers from qualitative inequalities based on gender.

4.2. Social Media and Messaging Applications

Table 2. Use of Social Media and Messaging Applications in the Last Three Months (By Gender, 2024)



Source: TURKSTAT, Household Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Usage Survey, 2024.

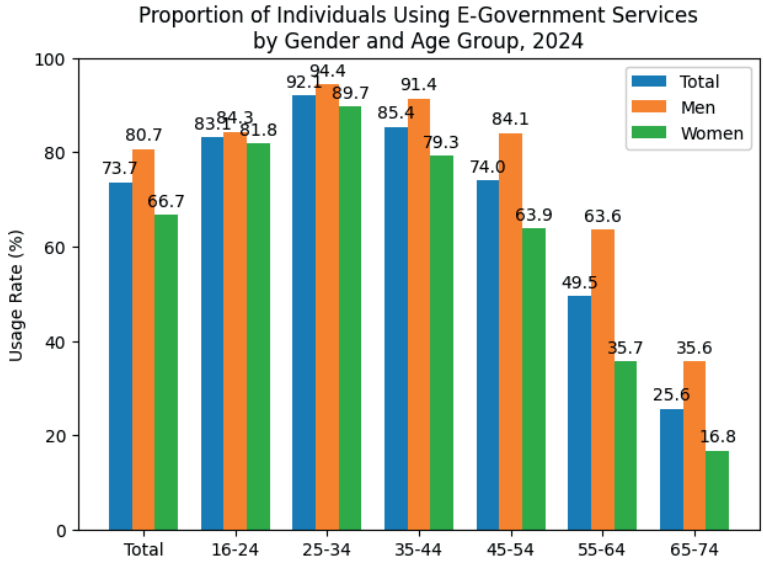
If we look at the data based on the number of people who have used social media and message transfer applications in the last three months, we can see that WhatsApp is the most commonly used social media platform by women and men (Table 2). The usage rate of WhatsApp is 89.5% for men and 82.9% for women. This indicates that WhatsApp is one of the most crucial digital communication tools in Türkiye today.

The usage rate of YouTube, Facebook, X, and TikTok applications is higher in men compared to women. The difference is quite large in the usage rate of Facebook (60.5%) and X (27.6%). However, the usage rate of Snapchat is higher in women (11.3%) compared to men (8.3%). Instagram and YouTube have high usage rates among women and men, with slight variations between the two (Table 2).

These results suggest that social media usage is not merely about the quantity, but rather the varying usage rates of different social media platforms reflect the varying digital usage rates among women and men.

4.3. Use of E-Government Services

Table 3. Proportion of Individuals Using E-Government Services by Gender and Age Group (2024)



Source: TURKSTAT, Household Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Usage Survey, 2024.

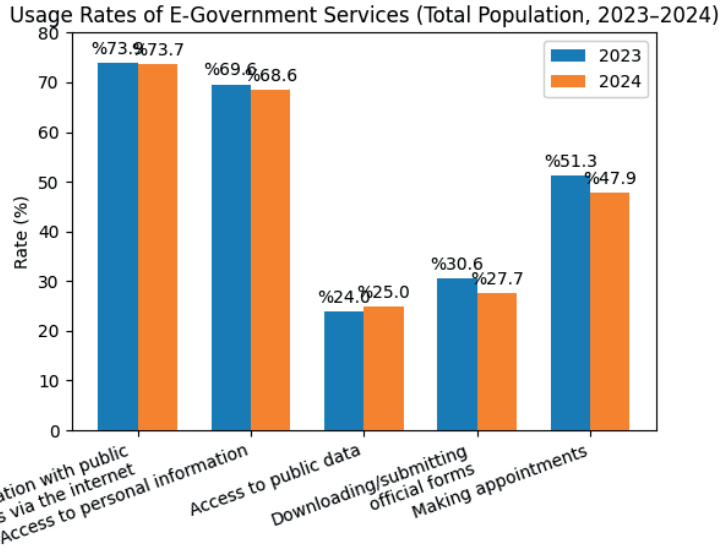
Based on the data collected in 2024, the rate of people who benefited from public services through the official institutions' website or application within the last 12 months is 73.7% (Table 3). Furthermore, when the data are analyzed based on gender, the rate of people who use e-government services is distributed as follows: for men, the rate is 80.7%, and for women, the rate is 66.7%. This shows that gender also affects access to digital public services.

In addition, when the data are analyzed based on age, the highest rate of people who use e-government services is related to the 25–34 age group, which reaches a peak of 92.1%. However, a decline is observed in the rate of people who use e-government services, starting from the 45–54 age group. The lowest rate of people who use e-government services is related to the 65–74 age group, which is 25.6% (Table 3).

This shows that a high level of digital divide exists between different generations in terms of access to digital public services. The findings show that despite the expansion of the scope of e-government services, age and gender are important factors for access to digital public services.

4.4. Use of E-Government Services by Service Type

Table 4. Usage Rates of E-Government Service Types (Total Population, 2023–2024)



Source: TURKSTAT, Household Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Usage Survey, 2024.

If a comparative analysis is conducted on the purposes of e-government service use for 2023 and 2024, it is clear that for both years, communication with public institutions via the internet is the dominant purpose for using e-government services (Table 4). Furthermore, the usage rate for communication with public institutions via the internet was high in 2024 at 73.7%.

Moreover, access to personal information was recorded at 68.6% in 2024, indicating a slight decline compared to the previous year. However, a slight increase was recorded for access to public data from 24.0% to 25.0%, indicating a growing interest in using public open data.

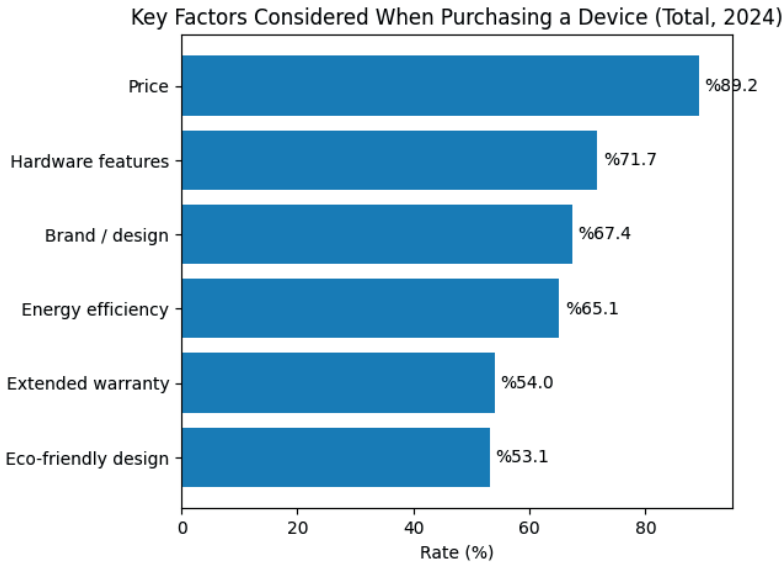
It is interesting to note that the usage rate for downloading/submission of official forms and appointment has decreased in 2024. The rate for the usage of official form procedures has fallen from 30.6% to 27.7%, and the rate for

appointment has fallen from 51.3% to 47.9%. This might be related to the development of some e-government services and the offer of these services through mobile applications in alternative formats.

In conclusion, based on the information presented in Table 4, it is clear that e-government services are widely used; however, there are changes in the usage of these services.

4.5. E-Commerce Usage

Table 5. E-Commerce Usage Rate by Gender (2023–2024)



Source: TURKSTAT, Household Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Usage Survey, 2024.

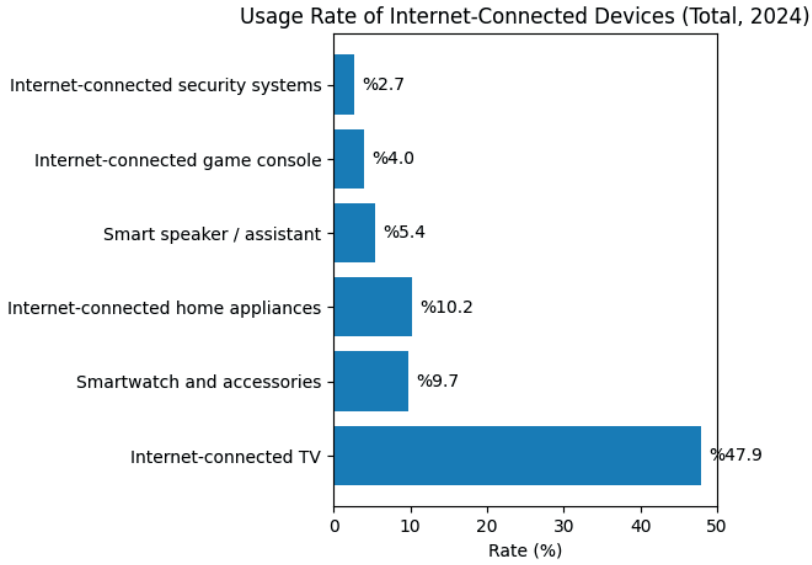
The results obtained from the data presented in Table 5 show that the rate of e-commerce usage in Türkiye has increased for all groups during the period between 2023 and 2024. As can be seen from the data, the rate of individuals who buy goods and services online has reached 51.7% of the total population in Türkiye by the year 2024, which is more than the 50% threshold.

If we analyze the data by gender, the results show that the rate of e-commerce usage is higher for men compared to women in 2023 and 2024. The rate of e-commerce usage for men has increased from 52.4% to 54.1%, while the rate for women has increased from 46.6% to 49.3% during the period between 2023 and 2024, as presented in Table 5.

Although the increase in the rate of e-commerce usage is more limited for women compared to men, the results show that the rate of e-commerce usage is increasing for women as well. This means that the rate of digital consumption is becoming more widespread for women, despite the differences between the genders, and that the phenomenon of e-commerce is becoming more inclusive in nature in Türkiye, as presented in Table 5.

4.6. Digital Device Purchasing Preferences

Table 6. Key Factors Considered When Purchasing a Device (Total, 2024)



Source: TURKSTAT, Household Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Usage Survey, 2024.

The findings reveal that the price of the digital device is the most crucial factor in the digital device purchase process. According to the data presented in 2024, price emerged as the most crucial factor in the purchase of digital devices, significantly higher than the other factors, with a rate of 89.2% (Table 6). This reveals the strong relationship between economic factors and access to digital technology.

The next crucial factor in the purchase of digital devices is hardware specifications, including storage capacity, processor, and camera, at a rate of 71.7%. The brand and design of the digital device are considered crucial by 67.4% of the users, while energy efficiency scored a remarkable 65.1%. These

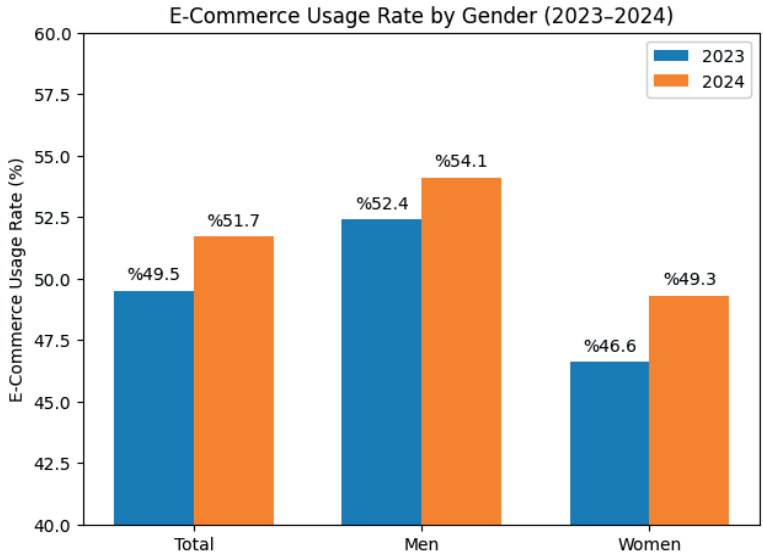
findings reveal the significance of economic and environmental issues in the purchase of digital technology.

The fact that extended warranty (54.0%) and "eco-friendly design" (53.1%) scored higher than the average as crucial factors among the users reveals the growing significance of these issues in digital technology consumption.

In general, the results shown in Table 6 indicate that economic and technical considerations continue to be the driving forces behind the purchase of digital devices, but environmental sensitivity and reliability have also become important.

4.7. Use of Internet-Connected Devices

Table 7. Usage Rate of Internet-Connected Devices (Total, 2024)



Source: TURKSTAT, Household Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Usage Survey, 2024.

From the analysis of the usage rate of internet-connected devices as of 2024, internet-connected televisions, at a rate of 47.9%, are the most utilized internet-connected devices, far surpassing the usage rate of other internet-connected devices (Table 7). This shows that internet usage is mainly for entertainment within the home.

Internet-connected home appliances are moderately used at a rate of 10.2%, and internet-connected smartwatches and accessories are also moderately used at a rate of 9.7%. Smart speakers and virtual assistants are the preference of a

smaller segment of the population at a rate of 5.4%. Internet-connected game consoles and security systems are the least used at a rate of 4.0% and 2.7%, respectively (Table 7).

This distribution shows that the digital transformation in daily life is happening through entertainment-focused and basic-level digital technologies, while the adoption of smart home systems and advanced digital infrastructures is relatively low in society. Therefore, based on the findings presented in Table 7, it can be concluded that the level of digital transformation in Türkiye is relatively low, and the transition towards advanced digital systems is happening gradually.

The adoption of smart home systems, wearable technologies, and virtual assistants is relatively low, and the adoption of internet-based security systems and gaming consoles has the lowest level of adoption. This shows that advanced digital systems have not been integrated at a high level within society, and the digital transformation process is happening gradually and unevenly.

5. Discussion

Accordingly, the findings of the current study suggest that, in terms of the level of infrastructural diffusion and access, the process of digital transformation in Türkiye has reached a high level as of 2024. However, there are inequalities in the level of digital participation based on age and gender. This is similar to what is theoretically described in the literature.

The increase in internet usage by the population in general, up to 88.8%, implies that the country has passed the first-level digital divide issue with regard to physical access (Norris, 2001). From the perspective of the theory of network society, the high internet usage rate implies the increasingly central role of digital networks in facilitating communication (Castells, 2010). However, as van Dijk (2020) states, the digital divide has increasingly moved from access-based inequalities towards inequalities in skill and outcome levels. The presence of inequalities between the genders with regard to internet usage and e-commerce participation implies that communicative empowerment is not necessarily guaranteed by physical access.

Gender-based differences in Internet and E-commerce usage are also in line with studies that highlight the relationship between digital inequality and other social structures, as argued by Wajcman (2010). Although differences in Internet access are decreasing, differences in Internet confidence, skill acquisition, and economic participation remain. In that case, the study is in line

with Selwyn's (2016) argument that digital technologies are not isolated from institutional and cultural contexts that could reinforce pre-existing hierarchies.

Age-related disparities, particularly in the use of e-government, also offer further proof of the existence of second- and third-level digital divides. As expected, the age bracket of 25-34 shows extremely high engagement in the use of digital public services, while engagement significantly declines in older age groups. This phenomenon also shows a clear link to Hargittai's (2002) argument regarding the significance of digital skills in the engagement of individuals in digital public spaces. It also shows a link to Helsper's (2021) argument regarding the existence of digital inequalities as a result of offline social stratification. The generational divide in the use of e-government shows that digital public service provision, as advanced as it may be, may not be accessible to all in society.

The decline in the usage of e-government services among the older age groups also validates van Deursen and van Dijk's (2019) statement that digital inequality in the present day is becoming a function of skill and outcome differences rather than a function of access limitations. Consistent with the arguments of UN DESA (2022, 2024), e-government services have enormous potential for promoting digital citizenship. However, the findings of this study suggest that this potential may not be fully harnessed in the presence of digital literacy issues.

Further analysis of social media usage shows that digital participation should not be seen as merely a matter of quantity. The dominance of WhatsApp suggests a high degree of integration of digital communication into everyday interaction, as suggested by Boyd's (2014) concept of networked publics. The differences between genders in terms of social media platforms used suggest how communicative practices might be subject to social and cultural norms and expectations more broadly. The use of social media platforms can therefore suggest not only digital access but also differentiated digital capitals.

From the point of view of platformization, the prevalence of social media and e-commerce in Türkiye may be understood in the context of platform society, as suggested by van Dijck et al. (2018). The increase in e-commerce beyond 50% may be understood as the establishment of platform capitalism, following the arguments of Srnicek (2017). However, the presence of gender-based variations in e-commerce may suggest that economic participation is still uneven in digital markets.

The findings on the preferences for digital devices may also be understood in the context of the depth of digital transformation in Turkish society. The

prevalence of internet-connected televisions may suggest that digitalization is still based on the pursuit of entertainment and media consumption. This may be understood in the context of the establishment of networked media in domestic settings, but it may also suggest the need for critical evaluation of the depth of advanced digital engagement. From the point of view of the public sphere, digital connectivity may not necessarily lead to advanced forms of participation, following the arguments of Habermas (2006) and Papacharissi (2010).

In conclusion, the study has revealed that the process of digital transformation in Türkiye is marked by robust infrastructural development but lagging participatory integration. The study has also validated van Dijk's (2020) theory of multidimensional digital inequality, which suggests that, in fact, digital inequality does exist at the levels of skills and outcomes, even as inequalities in access are reduced. Likewise, Helsper's (2021) theory that inequalities in the offline world reinforce inequalities in the online world has also been validated by the study, given the inequalities that were revealed in terms of age and gender. Therefore, it is important that we view the process of digital transformation not in isolation but as a process of communicative restructuring that is inextricably linked with social stratification.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of this research is to examine the quantitative status of digital transformation in Türkiye as of 2024, based on internet, social media, electronic commerce, and electronic government usage. The research findings clearly show that access and usage have been increasing quantitatively in Türkiye, but this does not mean that equal and effective digital participation is guaranteed for all segments of society.

The increase in internet usage rates, which was at a level of 64.2% and has now risen to 88.8% as of 2024, clearly shows that access and usage opportunities for digital technologies have been diffused in Türkiye (Table 1). However, it should be emphasized that while men's internet usage rates are still higher than those of women in Türkiye, it is clear that, despite the reduction in the access and usage dimensions of the digital divide, they have not been completely eliminated.

The findings related to social media and messaging application usage demonstrate that digital engagement differs depending on platform usage. Although the high usage rate for WhatsApp among women and men represents the central role that digital communication plays in people's lives, the fact that men have higher usage rates for news-, video-, and debate-related platforms and

women have balanced or even higher usage rates for visually and messaging-related platforms suggests that gender-based social roles are still linked with digital engagement.

The findings related to e-government services reveal that digital public services are one of the most salient areas in terms of inequality in the context of the digital transformation process. Although the usage rate for e-government services reaches as high as 92.1% for people aged between 25 and 34 years old, it decreases dramatically to 25.6% for people aged between 65 and 74 years old (see Table 3). This finding suggests that there is a significant intergenerational gap in terms of digital engagement. In addition, men having higher rates for e-government usage than women suggests that gender-based inequality still affects people's engagement in digital public services.

An analysis of the pattern of use of each type of e-government service reveals that communication with public institutions via the internet is the most frequently used service, but the decline in the use of downloading/submitting official forms and making appointments in 2024 indicates that the pattern of use of digital public services is changing over time.

The findings regarding the use of e-commerce services reveal that the use of purchasing goods/services via the internet is now a dominant pattern of consumption in Turkish society. The increase in the rate of using e-commerce services, which is above 50% in 2024, reveals the importance of the digital economy in Turkish society (see Table 5). Although the rates of use of e-commerce services are higher for men than for women, the increase in the rates of use of these services for women reveals that digital consumption is becoming more inclusive.

Findings with regard to the purchase of digital devices emphasize the economic factor of digital transformation. The dominance of the factor of price as the most determining factor for digital device purchase indicates that the issue of digital technology access is still closely related to the material world (see Table 6). This indicates that the digital divide is not only a matter of culture and demographics but is also closely related to economic factors.

Lastly, with regard to the usage of internet-connected devices, it is evident that the depth of digital transformation is still limited. Although the usage rates of internet-connected television devices are high, the low rates of usage of smart home systems, wearable technologies, and security systems indicate that digital transformation is still limited to the domains of entertainment and usage. This is as shown in Table 7 above.

In consideration of these findings, it is evident that while digital transformation policies are significant in investing in the development and expansion of infrastructure and access, it is also imperative that the development of simplified and accessible e-government applications for older age groups is significant and of great importance. In addition, the expansion and development of gender-sensitive and women-centered digital technologies can also be useful in reducing inequalities.

In addition, considering the fact that social media usage and e-commerce are widespread in society, it is necessary for digital citizenship skills to be encouraged within society. In conclusion, it can be said that the following has been demonstrated by the current study: Digital transformation in Türkiye has made significant progress in terms of access, but there are structural barriers in terms of usage. It is necessary for digital transformation in Türkiye to be qualitative rather than quantitative.

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CHAPTER 3

Russians in the Collective Memory of Erzurum

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Abstract

This study examines the perception of Russians in the collective memory of Erzurum within a historical and socio-cultural framework. Drawing on the theoretical approaches of Halbwachs and Assmann, collective memory is conceptualized not as a passive reflection of the past, but as a dynamic structure continuously reconstructed through social interactions, cultural representations, and intergenerational transmission. In this context, the study aims to reveal the role of critical historical turning points—particularly the Ottoman-Russian wars and the Russian occupation of Erzurum in 1916—in shaping local perceptions of Russians. Adopting a qualitative and interpretive approach, the research analyzes oral cultural elements (such as folk songs, laments, and proverbs), written sources (including memoirs, literary works, and academic studies), and spatial components (historical structures and sites of memory). The findings indicate that the perception of Russians is not solely based on historical events themselves, but is shaped by how these events are remembered, interpreted, and culturally reproduced. In this process, Russians are predominantly positioned as the "other" and associated with themes of

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invasion, threat, and loss. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that the perception of Russians in Erzurum's collective memory constitutes a multilayered structure continuously reproduced through historical trauma, cultural transmission, and identity construction processes.

Keywrods: Collective Memory, Russian Perception, Erzurum, Cultural Representation

Introduction

Events experienced by a society in the past are transmitted to subsequent generations through collective memory and contribute to the formation of social identity. Collective memory can be conceptualized as a form of shared remembrance that is constructed through social interactions and transmitted across generations, extending beyond individuals' personal experiences. Although remembering may appear to be an individual cognitive process, as emphasized in Durkheim's (2005) concept of "collective consciousness," memory fundamentally encompasses a collective process and cannot be considered independently of its social context.

Systematizing the idea of collective consciousness, Halbwachs (1980) argues that memory is not individual but socially constructed, and that individuals interpret the past through the social environment in which they are embedded. Similarly, Assmann (2001) highlights that collective memory is not merely a reflection of the past but is continuously reproduced and sustained through cultural codes, symbols, and rituals. Therefore, collective memory encompasses not only what has been experienced, but also what remains in the social mind, what is interpreted, and what is transmitted across generations.

As Schudson (2007) suggests, this process operates through the shaping of individual experiences within social conditions, the storage of the past through material and cultural means, and its reproduction via intergenerational transmission. In this sense, collective memory is not a passive reflection of the past; rather, it is a dynamic process that guides identity construction, strengthens social belonging, and provides a framework of meaning for the future.

Due to its geographical location, the city of Erzurum has closely witnessed Ottoman–Russian relations and has experienced numerous wars and occupations throughout its history. This study aims to examine the 1877–1878 Ottoman–Russian War (the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878) and the Russian occupation of Erzurum in terms of how they have been embedded in the collective memory of society through written texts and oral cultural products.

Within this framework, the study analyzes the historical events that have shaped this perception, as well as their reflections in architectural structures and in oral and written cultural forms. In the case of Erzurum, this process can be traced through a multilayered field of representation. Elements of oral culture, such as proverbs, folk songs, and narratives, contribute to sustaining collective memory by conveying experiences of war and occupation on an emotional and symbolic level. In contrast, written sources—including memoirs, literary texts, and academic works, particularly graduate theses and scholarly articles produced at Atatürk University—systematically document the Ottoman–Russian wars and occupation processes within a scientific framework.

Furthermore, collective memory is not produced solely through narratives but also through spatial elements. Structures such as the Aziziye Bastions, Oltu Russian Castle, and the Pushkin House in Erzurum function as significant sites of memory where historical experiences are materialized and spatially represented. By carrying the traces of past wars and occupations into the present, these sites ensure the continuity of collective memory. Accordingly, when oral narratives, written texts, academic productions, and architectural structures are considered together, it becomes evident that the perception of Russians in Erzurum's collective memory is not merely based on historical events, but rather constitutes a multidimensional structure shaped through their cultural, symbolic, and spatial reproduction.

Within the scope of this study, it is demonstrated that the perception of Russians in Erzurum is not merely the result of historical events, but is also shaped by how these events are remembered, interpreted, and transmitted across generations by society. In this regard, the ways in which this perception is represented and reproduced in academic texts, written works, and oral cultural products have been examined. As noted in the previous discussion, collective memory is not a direct reflection of the past; rather, it is a product of experiences that are selectively remembered and meaningfully interpreted by society.

In the case of Erzurum, critical turning points such as wars, occupations, and migration—particularly the Ottoman–Russian wars and the Russian occupation of 1916—have not remained as mere historical events. Instead, they have left profound traces in collective memory and have formed the foundation of perceptions toward Russians. These experiences serve as significant reference points in the construction of collective memory.

In this process, these experiences have been materialized through physical spaces such as monuments, castles, and bastions, while also being reproduced through folk narratives, memories, literary works, and academic studies. Thus,

experiences related to the past persist not only in historical records but also within everyday practices and cultural representations, creating a collective sphere of meaning. In this context, the perception of Russians in the collective memory of Erzurum can be understood as a dynamic construct shaped not merely by historical events themselves, but by the cultural and symbolic reconstruction of traumatic experiences.

Collective Memory

Remembering can be defined as the ability of the human mind to bring memories stored in memory back into conscious awareness (İlhan, 2018: 22). For this reason, it is considered a cognitive activity. The concept of "collective memory" was first introduced by Hugo von Hofmannsthal in 1902 (Olick & Robbins, 1995: 106). Discussions on memory have largely been conducted through the notion of remembering; although it appears to be an individual act, it is widely accepted that remembering is shaped through social interaction. Within this framework, three main approaches to memory have been developed: individual, cultural, and collective memory. Among these, collective memory constitutes the primary focus of this study.

Durkheim's concept of "collective consciousness" holds a central role in the formation of collective memory. According to this perspective, consciousness and memory are shaped within a social process independent of the individual (Durkheim, 2005: 518). Maurice Halbwachs, who introduced the concept of "collective memory" into the literature in its modern sense, distinguished memory from neurological and biological explanations and argued that its primary determinant is the social environment (Assmann, 2001: 39–40). According to Halbwachs (1980), memory is not individual but socially constructed. In this process, social identity and historical context are of crucial importance; memory exists in relation to time, space, and the witnesses of that context. This is because human beings are never entirely isolated individuals (Halbwachs, 1980: 21).

Collective memory is not confined to a specific period of time; rather, it transcends temporal boundaries through its continuity and transmissibility (Halbwachs, 2007: 55). Although events are experienced by the witnesses of their own time, they are transmitted to subsequent generations. For this reason, the flow of time in everyday life intertwines the past with the present; time, remembering, and memory thus possess not merely an individual but a fundamentally social character. Collective memory constitutes an interdisciplinary field of study and is examined through various methods. Within historical approaches, archival documents, historical texts, and visual

materials are analyzed, while oral history studies compile the narratives of living witnesses through interviews, revealing the intergenerational transmission of memory. In this way, memories that fall outside official history are also incorporated into collective memory.

Collective memory is constructed upon the shared experiences of individuals and groups. Schudson (2007) identifies three key criteria that determine the social nature of memory. The first is that individual memory is socially formed or acquired through social conditions. The second criterion emphasizes that structures socially produced in the past—such as libraries, museums, monuments, books, and even houses—serve as repositories of collective memory. Finally, Schudson (2007: 181) argues that even if individuals have not directly experienced the past, they can develop images or understandings of it within cultural formations. This process becomes possible through both oral and written transmission across generations. Based on these criteria, it can be argued that the past is not accidental but is socially produced and carried into the present. The past is remembered not merely because it was experienced, but because it has been adopted and internalized by society (Assmann, 2001: 82). Similarly, Halbwachs (2007: 57) explains collective memory through processes of social determination and socialization. In this context, individuals internalize the ways of life, rituals, and symbolic forms of the society in which they live and transmit them to subsequent generations.

Collective memory operates in two forms in the process of perceiving the past: foundational (originary) remembering and biographical remembering. Foundational remembering refers to a form of remembrance integrated with lineage or collective identity, occurring externally and artificially through symbols, rituals, and cultural elements. In contrast, biographical remembering is a natural, internally driven process based on social interaction, encompassing an individual's recent past experiences (Assmann, 2008: 60). According to Assmann (2008) and Halbwachs (2007), collective memory emerges through the attribution of meaning to the past by both individuals and society. Therefore, it is essential for individuals to remain conscious of their past and to preserve their core cultural frameworks despite cultural change; otherwise, it becomes difficult to speak of a sustained collective memory.

Collective memory is an important instrument in the construction of identity and, in this regard, serves various functions. These functions are outlined by Licata et al. (2007) as follows:

- **Identity Definition:** Collective memory provides group members with a sense of who they are, what they have experienced in the past,

and possible expectations regarding the future. Within the group, shared understandings and interpretations of the past become established.

- **Identity Enhancement:** In collective memory, a group's past achievements and victories are emphasized and glorified, while its failures tend to be downplayed or obscured. In this way, the group's self-esteem is maintained.
- **Legitimization of Group Actions:** Actions carried out by the group in the past are justified and framed as legitimate.
- **Group Mobilization (Social Mobilization):** Past experiences constitute one of the most important resources for mobilizing a group. References to the past are frequently invoked in the construction of identity-based claims.

Assmann (2001: 59–62), within the framework of the concept of cultural memory, distinguishes between two types of memory: communicative memory and cultural memory. Assmann presents the distinction between communicative and cultural memory in a tabular form as follows:

Table 1. *Communicative and Cultural Memory*

	Communicative Memory	Cultural Memory
Content	Historical experiences within the framework of individual biographies	Mythical origins and events situated in a distant, inaccessible past
Form	Informal, loosely structured, and naturally evolving through communicative interaction	Planned, highly structured, and expressed through ceremonial communication, rituals, and festivals
Medium	Living memories, lived experiences, and narrative transmission within organic memory	Objectified in fixed forms, involving traditional symbolic encoding and performative representation through language, images, and dance
Temporal Structure	An 80–100 year time horizon, encompassing 3–4 generations and directly connected to the present	A fixed, mythical past
Memory Carriers	Indeterminate, living witnesses of a memory group	Specialized carriers of tradition

As shown in Table 1, Assmann associates communicative memory with what remains in the collective consciousness of society regarding the recent past, whereas cultural memory is linked to memories belonging to a more

distant past. Communicative memory is generation-specific and is shaped through the sharing of individual experiences among contemporaries. In this respect, it is temporally bound to a particular group; it emerges over time and gradually fades away. Moreover, this type of memory is limited to its carriers. In contrast, cultural memory recalls events that extend beyond the realm of everyday life. It is external in nature; its persistence, modes of transmission, and the duration for which it is preserved within collective memory are determined by society (Assmann, 2001: 61–63).

Russians in the Collective Memory of Erzurum

Collective memory is shaped not only by the ways in which a society remembers past events but also by the meanings attributed to these events. As emphasized by Halbwachs (1992), memory is reproduced within a social framework rather than being merely an individual mental process. In this context, historical traumas, wars, and occupations emerge as fundamental reference points in the formation of collective memory. Assmann (2008) argues that collective memory is nourished by traumatic experiences, particularly during periods of war and occupation, when both identity and the perception of the "other" are reconfigured. In the case of Erzurum, this dynamic can be clearly observed in the context of the Ottoman–Russian wars and the occupations experienced during World War I.

Throughout its history, the city of Erzurum has been the site of numerous wars and occupations due to its strategic location; therefore, historical traumas have played a decisive role in shaping local memory. The 1877–1878 Ottoman–Russian War (the Russo-Turkish War, also known as the "93 War") and the Russian occupation of 1916 have left deep imprints on the collective memory of the people of Erzurum. These events evolved into social traumas not only because of their military consequences but also due to the destruction, epidemics, population displacements, and loss of life they entailed. Following the severe defeat of the Ottoman army during the Sarıkamış Campaign, a typhus epidemic broke out in the region, leading to devastating consequences for both soldiers and civilians. Sources indicate that tens of thousands of soldiers and thousands of civilians lost their lives during this period, and that the epidemic caused a complete collapse of social order in Erzurum and its surroundings (Tekir, 2016: 45).

During this period, a significant portion of the population was forced to move away from the front lines and epidemic-affected areas, leading to large-scale migration in and around Erzurum. One of the primary drivers of this migration was the oppressive and violent practices imposed by the Russian army during the occupation. Historical records indicate that, following their

entry into the city, Russian forces seized the ammunition depot located in the Double Minaret Madrasa and Erzurum Castle, and subsequently conducted house-to-house searches to collect weapons. Furthermore, the capture of young men capable of bearing arms and the execution of seven individuals intensified the prevailing sense of fear and helplessness within the city (Yüksel, 2008: 267–268).

According to Postman (2016: 119), who conceptualizes language as a powerful transmitter of ideology, language structures the world by dividing it into subjects and objects, thereby determining how objects, events, and individuals are to be perceived and understood. In this respect, language plays a crucial role in the formation of oral culture and the construction of collective memory. Oral culture reinforces memory and, even from a subjective standpoint, significantly influences both the formation and transmission of collective memory (Ong, 2014: 124).

The role of historical accumulation is particularly significant in the formation of collective memory and its expression in the vernacular through idioms, proverbs, folk tales, and sayings. This linguistic repertoire is transmitted across generations and is instrumental in preserving the continuity of collective memory. What is essential here is that language operates ideologically, while collective memory remains subjective within this ideological framework. Accordingly, in the case of Erzurum, this process of reconstruction has been realized through the positioning of Russians as the "other," often labeled as "enemy," "occupier," or "infidel." The traumatic events experienced during the occupation period became deeply embedded in the collective consciousness of the local population and were reflected in oral cultural forms such as laments, folk poems, songs, narratives, and proverbs. These expressions of oral culture predominantly convey themes of exile, mourning, migration, and the tragedies of war.

"Erzurum'dan kaz yolla,

Kanadını yaz yolla,

Çavuş gurban oluyum,

Gardaşımı tez yolla."

"Send a goose from Erzurum,

Let its wings carry your message,

O sergeant, I implore you,

Send my brother home at once."

As can be observed in this folk verse, presented in both English and Turkish, the image of the goose functions as a symbolic element that reinforces the sense of longing. Although the precise origins of the verse remain unclear, its classification among the cultural products of the 93 Migrants period and the use of the term "sergeant," which refers to a rank within the Turkish military system, suggest that it reflects the emotional world of an individual expressing longing for a sibling under wartime conditions through a traditional poetic form. Accordingly, when the elements within the verse are considered in relation to both their historical context and symbolic connotations, it becomes evident that personal longing is transformed into an element of collective memory (Altınay, 2024: 443–444).

The displacement that began with the occupation of 1916 is also reflected as a sorrowful theme in the folk songs of Erzurum. The people articulated the hardships they endured in exile after leaving their homeland through poetic verses. In the anonymous long air (uzun hava) titled "Erzurum Mountains," an exile expresses his condition in the following lines:

"Dört yanımı sardı tel ilen,

Yaslı yaslı bayram yaptım el ilen,

Göz göz oldu yaralarım dil ilen,

Yaramı sarmaya da derman bulamam."

"Surrounded on all sides by barbed wire,

I celebrated the feast in sorrow among strangers,

My wounds have multiplied with every word I utter,

I can find no remedy to heal my wounds."

On the other hand, themes of homeland defense and military struggle are also prominent in the folk songs of Erzurum. Âşık Nihanî is known for his poems that boosted public morale during the years of the First World War and the Turkish War of Independence. His folk song titled "Vurun Aslanlarım" ("Strike, My Lions"), which he performed on the front lines in 1918 as the Turkish army recaptured Kars, reflects both a sense of heroism and a desire for vengeance.

"Karadağ'da düşman topu patlıyor,

Asker hücum etmiş, Kars'ı atlıyor;

Mazmanof hırsından iki çatlıyor…

Vurun aslanlarım Allah aşkına,

Şehit olanımız cennet köşküne."

"In Karadağ, the enemy's cannon is firing,

The soldiers have charged, crossing into Kars;

Mazmanov is nearly bursting with rage…

Strike, my lions, for the sake of God,

Those who fall as martyrs shall dwell in the mansions of paradise."

In these narratives, Russians are often represented as symbols of oppression, violence, and threat, corresponding to Connerton's (1989) concept of "embodied memory." This is because social traumas are not only preserved in written sources but are also sustained through intergenerational forms of emotional transmission, such as folk songs, poems, stories, and manis (traditional quatrains). Therefore, it is possible to observe the traces of the Russian occupation in the collective memory of Erzurum through folk music and other folkloric expressions.

On the other hand, an examination of written sources also provides insight into the perception of Russians within the collective memory of Erzurum. It is a common practice for societies to reinterpret and transmit the experiences of a given historical period through literary and academic forms such as novels, short stories, essays, and scholarly works. Ong (2014: 200), who has extensively studied oral and written cultures, emphasizes that oral culture, being grounded in sound, cannot be preserved in memory for extended periods, whereas elements transferred into written form tend to achieve greater permanence in both individual and collective memory. Written sources in the form of literary works that bear traces of a particular period may lack objectivity, as they inevitably reflect the author's perspective. Therefore, academic and more objective studies are of particular importance in providing more concrete data regarding collective memory.

Particularly in the field of social sciences, researchers often tend to analyze the society and culture to which they belong. This underscores the importance of the researcher—who also functions as a carrier of collective memory—maintaining an objective stance toward events and phenomena. By seeking answers to questions arising from the society they observe and internalize, researchers contribute, through their academic publications, to keeping the memory of such events and experiences alive within the collective memory.

The work titled "Başımıza Gelenler" ("What Happened to Us") by the Ottoman bureaucrat Mehmed Arif Bey is among the significant memoirs that narrate this period. In his recollections from the time when he served as the chief clerk to Ahmet Muhtar Pasha during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 (known as the '93 War), the author defines the Russians as the "enemy" and characterizes the advance of the Russian army as a "national catastrophe" (Mehmed Arif Bey, 2006: 41).

In the "Erzurum" section of Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's "Beş Şehir" ("Five Cities"), there are passages addressing the occupation period of the city. Tanpınar describes the women of Erzurum during the war years as "the heirs of Nene Hatun, who struck down the infidel Moscovite," thereby, even within a literary style, othering Russians and constructing them as an "absolute enemy" in the perception of the local population (Tanpınar, 2019: 30–31). Moreover, in the same work, Tanpınar alludes to the war years through references to the city's harsh climate and portrays Russians as an inherent and persistent threat.

In this context, the memoirs of Kazım Karabekir Pasha are particularly important for understanding the place of the 1916 Russian occupation of Erzurum and its aftermath within the collective memory of the people. In his work "İstiklal Harbimiz" ("Our War of Independence"), Karabekir recounts that when a Russian spy disguised as a Muslim was captured, members of the local population approached him and attempted to secure the spy's release:

"Those who infiltrated among us through conversion, presenting themselves with smiles and promises of benefit—who knows what they have done to the poor Turkish nation over long periods of time. When, last year in Erzurum, the residents of a neighborhood came to my headquarters to vouch for a converted Russian spy we had captured, I recorded the following in my memoirs upon observing their state: 'O son of the Turk! You are too naïve; everyone has deceived you. Those who claimed to have attained faith, those who said they had converted, led you astray from your path.'" (Karabekir, 1959: 323).

In addition to literary works and memoirs, the perception of Russians within the collective memory of Erzurum is also reflected in the content of academic studies. It is possible to identify studies on Russians in journals published by Atatürk University in Erzurum, as well as in graduate theses.

Table 2. *Graduate Theses on Russians Prepared at Atatürk University*

Author & Year	Thesis Title	Type	Findings and Conclusions
Aykun, 1999	The First Russian Occupation in Erzurum and Its Surroundings (1828–1829)	Master's Thesis	The diplomatic isolation, military unpreparedness, and internal problems of the Ottoman Empire facilitated Russia's advance into Eastern Anatolia. Following the occupation of Kars and Ahıska, the occupation of Erzurum temporarily shifted the regional balance of power in favor of Russia. However, the occupation did not become permanent due to both local resistance and international dynamics; the status of the region was reshaped through the Treaty of Edirne. Overall, the study demonstrates that Erzurum's strategic position was a decisive factor in Ottoman–Russian rivalry and that the war produced not only military but also administrative and social consequences.
Yüksel, 2006	The Fall of Erzurum under Russian Occupation during the First World War	Master's Thesis	Following the Sarıkamış Campaign, the Ottoman Third Army, severely weakened, was unable to resist the intensive and well-planned offensives of the Russian Caucasus Army; consequently, Erzurum fell under Russian occupation on 16 February 1916. After the occupation, the Russian army consolidated its military superiority in Eastern Anatolia by taking control of strategic routes. The study highlights that Erzurum's strategic location played a decisive role in the course of the war and that military weakening rendered the occupation inevitable.
Öncü, 2006	The Administrative and Socio-Economic Condition of the Erzurum Province between 1908–1923	Doctoral Dissertation	Between 1908 and 1923, Erzurum Province experienced a profoundly turbulent period politically, militarily, and economically. Although the Second Constitutional Period aimed to revitalize agriculture, trade, education, and public works, the Italo-Turkish War, the Balkan Wars, and the First World War largely disrupted these efforts. The Russian occupation, followed by Armenian atrocities, led to severe demographic, economic, and social devastation; the population migrated, and the city suffered both physical and institutional destruction. During the War of Independence, Erzurum became a strategic center; however, recovery was delayed due to ongoing war conditions. Overall, the study reveals that Erzurum remained in a continuous state of crisis and warfare during this period, and that genuine reconstruction became possible only after the establishment of the Republic.
Tosun, 2011	The Liberation of Erzurum from Enemy Occupation (12 March 1918)	Master's Thesis	The findings indicate that, as a result of the forward offensive initiated by the Third Army on 12 February 1918, Erzurum was liberated on 12 March 1918, following Erzincan and Trabzon. The study concludes that the liberation of Erzurum was not only a military success but also a crucial turning point in the strategic balance of Eastern Anatolia.

A critical evaluation of the studies presented in Table 2 indicates that Erzurum underwent a historical trajectory predominantly shaped by war, occupation, and military struggle from the nineteenth century through to the establishment of the Republic. The Russian occupation of 1828–1829, the occupation during the First World War, and the liberation process of 1918 collectively underscore the decisive role of the city's strategic position within Ottoman–Russian rivalry. At the same time, these processes demonstrate that wars generated not only military outcomes but also profound administrative, demographic, and socio-economic disruptions.

This recurring cycle of occupation–resistance–liberation has consolidated Erzurum's identity in the collective memory as a "frontier city," a "site of resistance," and a "strategic center," while simultaneously enabling the entanglement of narratives of trauma, loss, and resilience. Accordingly, the table illustrates that Erzurum's historical experience extends beyond a mere sequence of military events, constituting instead a deeply rooted process of collective memory formation transmitted across generations.

Table 3. *Russian Studies in Academic Journals of Atatürk University*

Author & Year	Article Title	Journal	Findings and Conclusions
Özcan, 1995	Ottoman–Russian Relations up to the War of 1877–1878	Atatürk University Journal of Social Sciences	The study emphasizes that the internal political and economic crises of the Ottoman Empire, along with shifts in the European balance of power, constituted the primary factors leading to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 (the '93 War), and that the war emerged as an inevitable outcome of a long-standing power struggle.
Şahin ve Yavuz, 2007	The Russian Occupation of Erzurum (1916) According to *The Times* Newspaper	Atatürk University Atatürk Journal	The study reveals that, through the discourse of *The Times*, British public opinion approached the Russian advance with a relatively favorable perspective, and that the occupation of Erzurum carried significance not only as a military event but also within the context of international power dynamics and propaganda.
Aydın, 2008	Anglo–Russian Rivalry and the Question of the Ottoman Empire's Asian Territories (1877–1878)	Journal of the Atatürk University Institute of Turkic Studies	The study demonstrates that during the '93 War, the Ottoman Empire's Asian territories became a focal point of bargaining among great powers, leading to the formation of a new European balance of power.

Yüksel, 2008	The First Days of the Russian Occupation of Erzurum during the First World War	Journal of the Atatürk University Institute of Turkic Studies	The occupation of Erzurum on 16 February 1916 resulted from the weakened state of the Ottoman Third Army following the Sarıkamış Campaign, strategic failures in defensive lines, and the planned offensive of Russian forces. In the early days of occupation, the city was rapidly evacuated; hundreds of thousands of Muslims were forced to migrate under harsh winter conditions, resulting in significant loss of life. The Russian administration established a military-administrative structure, fortifying Erzurum as a westward-oriented military base. Armenian groups played an active role in looting, arrests, and massacres. Meanwhile, Azerbaijani Turks and the Baku Islamic Charity Society provided crucial material and moral support. Overall, the study demonstrates that the occupation was not merely a military event but a multidimensional process involving demographic destruction, forced migration, colonization, and social trauma.
Kutlu, 2010	Turkish Prisoners of War in Russia during the First World War	Journal of the Atatürk University Institute of Turkic Studies	Approximately 65,000 Turkish soldiers were captured during the wars with Russia; however, precise numbers remain uncertain due to administrative disorder, inconsistent records, and wartime chaos. Comparative sources suggest that by 1918, around 40,000–50,000 Turkish prisoners were in Russia. Many perished due to hunger, disease, and harsh conditions, while some later returned to Turkey. The study concludes that the ambiguity surrounding prisoner numbers stems from wartime conditions, lack of records, and administrative fragmentation following the Bolshevik Revolution. It also notes that over one hundred thousand Turkish civilians were exiled or interned, although exact figures remain unknown.
Demirel, 2010	Administrative Restructuring in Eastern Anatolia after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878	Journal of the Atatürk University Institute of Turkic Studies	The study examines the administrative restructuring in Eastern Anatolia following the cession of Kars, Ardahan (Çıldır), and Batum to Russia. New administrative arrangements were introduced on both Ottoman and Russian sides at district and sub-district levels. Findings indicate that the artificial nature of the new borders caused significant problems in land use, pastures, and economic life, while dividing kinship networks. The study concludes that the war resulted not only in territorial loss but also in long-term administrative, economic, and social challenges.

Özger, 2010	The Demographic Structure of Erzurum before the Tanzimat (Based on the 1835 Census Register)	Journal of the Atatürk University Institute of Turkic Studies	Based on the 1835 census register, the study reveals that Erzurum had 55 neighborhoods and 151 villages, with a population consisting of 82% Muslims and 18% non-Muslims. It also demonstrates that the population, estimated at 100,000–130,000 before the 1828–1829 war, declined dramatically to around 15,000 after the Russian occupation due to migration and destruction. The study highlights the direct impact of war, occupation, and migration on demographic structure.
Coşkun, 2013	The War of 1877–1878 (the '93 War) through the Language of Photographs	Atatürk University Journal of Social Sciences	The study contributes to visual historiography by combining written documents with maps, fortification images, city photographs, and chronological tables. It enhances understanding of the war through visual materials and structured presentation, offering a significant contribution to the field.
Eyyupoğlu, 2016	The Bayburt Gendarmerie Battalion Command and the Defense of Kop Mountain (March–July 1916)	Atatürk Journal	Following the occupation of Erzurum in 1916, the Kop Mountain and Bayburt line gained strategic importance. Intense clashes occurred between March and July 1916. Although partial successes were achieved, the defense collapsed under Russian offensives, leading to the evacuation of Bayburt and subsequent Russian advances. The study highlights the strategic and logistical limitations of the defense line.
Taşkesenlioğlu, 2020	Foreign Population in Erzurum (1835–1847)	Journal of the Atatürk University Institute of Turkic Studies	The study identifies significant internal migration movements following the 1828–1829 war, with both Muslim and non-Muslim populations relocating to Erzurum. Occupational differentiation is evident, with Muslims engaged in services and crafts, and non-Muslims in trade. The study reveals a dynamic socio-economic structure shaped by migration, trade, and artisanal production.
Aydın, 2022	Intelligence Activities within the Framework of Russia's Expansionist Policy toward the Ottoman Empire in the Second Half of the 19th Century	Journal of the Atatürk University Institute of Turkic Studies	The study demonstrates that Russia intensified intelligence activities due to the strategic importance of Ottoman territories. Archival documents show that Russia employed both Muslim and non-Muslim Ottoman subjects for espionage through financial incentives, propaganda, and provocation. Russian consulates functioned as intelligence centers, significantly influencing foreign policy and war processes. The study concludes that Russian policy involved not only military intervention but also systematic intelligence and destabilization strategies.

The studies presented in Table 3, all of which have been published in the academic journals of Atatürk University, demonstrate that the perception of Russians in the collective memory of Erzurum has been shaped through processes of written and institutionalized memory production. The articles generally position Russia, from the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 to the First World War, as an occupying and expansionist actor that transformed regional power dynamics. At the same time, through themes such as the occupation of Erzurum, forced migration, demographic ruptures, captivity, administrative restructuring, and intelligence activities, they reveal that Russian intervention produced not only military but also social and structural consequences.

In this respect, these studies do not merely analyze historical events; rather, by documenting Erzurum's traumatic experiences with Russia through academic texts, they transform collective memory into a form of written cultural memory. Accordingly, this body of literature constitutes a significant and enduring point of reference for understanding how the perception of Russia in Erzurum has been constructed within a framework of historical continuity.

Collective memory refers to the persistence of significant past events within the lived recollections of a society. Media, in turn, plays a critical role in both the construction and transmission of this memory. Events that leave a lasting imprint on society can be continually reproduced and disseminated through various forms of media, including news coverage in traditional media, commemorative programs and documentaries produced after the passage of time, as well as content generated on social media platforms.

In this regard, the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 (the '93 War) and the Russian occupation of Erzurum in 1916, both of which left profound traces in the collective memory of the people of Erzurum, have not been forgotten despite the passage of decades, largely due to their sustained representation in media. The memories associated with these two periods have been repeatedly rearticulated through different media forms across time, thereby preserving their place within Erzurum's cultural identity. Indeed, the large-scale destruction, forced migration (muhaceret), and popular resistance caused by the '93 War in Erzurum are described as "Erzurum witnessed the most painful scenes of tears and migration" (Erzurumgazetesi.com, 2025). Through the influence of media, these historical periods have come to be embedded in contemporary collective memory as narratives of "ancestral heroism" and "dark times."

Nene Hatun, who gained renown for her heroism during the occupation period of Erzurum, emerges as a historical figure whose story has been transmitted through both oral narratives and historical texts. Indeed, her story attained national recognition following interviews conducted in 1937 by

journalists of the period with veterans of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 (the '93 War). In the subsequent years, particularly after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, Nene Hatun's symbolic status was further reinforced through mediated representations. In 1952, during a military ceremony held in Erzurum, she was awarded the title "Mother of the Third Army," and in 1955, she was selected as "Mother of the Year" during Turkey's first official Mother's Day celebrations—both of which were disseminated nationwide through the press (Fiktiyat.com, 2019).

Newspapers published in Erzurum frequently address the Russian occupations, particularly on commemorative occasions. One of the city's local newspapers, Erzurum Haber Gazetesi (2010), presented a series of articles titled "The Dark Days of Erzurum," conveying to readers the periods during which the city was under Russian occupation. In this series, the fall of Erzurum on 16 February 1916, the hardships experienced by the population during the occupation, and the liberation in 1918 are described in detail. Notably, the series also references a 1916 report from the British newspaper The Times, indicating that Erzurum was portrayed in the international press of the period as "the key to the Turks' Asian territories."

Similarly, historical narratives are revisited on significant commemorative dates such as 12 March (the anniversary of the liberation of Erzurum) and 9 November (Aziziye Memorial Day). For instance, one of the local media outlets, Pusula Gazetesi (2025), reported that thousands of residents of Erzurum marched to the Aziziye Bastion following morning prayers during the 148th anniversary of the Aziziye defense, stating: "A commemorative event was organized at the Aziziye Bastions, where some of the fiercest battles of the 1877–1878 Ottoman–Russian War, known in history as the '93 War,' took place." Such narratives function not merely as news reporting; rather, by evoking a sense of reenactment, they contribute to the reinforcement of collective memory.

Compared to the written press, visual and auditory media tend to be more effective in reinforcing collective memory. Through documentaries, television programs, and archival footage presented in news media, societies are able to visualize past events, thereby enabling the formation of more vivid and enduring memory traces. In this context, TRT Documentary has produced programs such as "The Epic of Aziziye" and other documentaries focusing on the heroism of Nene Hatun. Within the series titled "Documentary of the Courage of Turkish Women," the episode "Nene Hatun – A Mother's Heart of a Nation" portrays the defense of Aziziye in Erzurum and Nene Hatun's self-sacrifice (YouTube.com, 2025). In this documentary, the story of Nene

Hatun—who "left her baby in the cradle and rushed to the defense" during the '93 War—is reconstructed through a dramatized narrative. TRT archives also contain footage from the final years of Nene Hatun's life. According to TRT archival sources, black-and-white recordings from the 1950s document her being honored at military ceremonies (Fikriyat.com, 2019).

In addition to media, spaces and monuments also play a crucial role in the construction and preservation of collective memory. As Nora (1989) conceptualizes, such sites function as lieux de mémoire, materially representing historical experience within the physical landscape. In this way, the traumatic traces of the past are sustained not only through narratives but also within the urban fabric itself. In the case of Erzurum, sites such as the Aziziye Bastions, the Aziziye Martyrs' Memorial, Oltu Russian Castle, and the Pushkin House emerge as significant locations through which the perception of Russia is maintained within the city's collective memory.

The Aziziye bastions consist of three separate fortifications arranged in a "C" formation at the southern end of Top Mountain, strategically positioned to control the Erzurum–Kars route and the Hamamderesi passage. Both official records and academic studies recognize this site as the primary locus of Erzurum's defense during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878. Some of these bastions were captured during Russian attacks, rendering the site particularly significant within the collective memory as a locus of resistance (Erzurum Governorship, 2020).

From the perspective of its social function, the Aziziye area has evolved from a "military security zone" into the "Nene Hatun Historical National Park," covering 387 hectares as of 18 May 2009. This administrative transformation has facilitated the institutionalization of commemorative tourism and visitor practices. The introduction of observation terraces, tour routes, and accessibility arrangements has rendered the site more visible as a space of public engagement. Moreover, within the proposed cultural route of the region, the commemorative marches—particularly those held in November—play a crucial role in sustaining and updating the memory of war through ritualized repetition (Aksakallı et al., 2017: 235).

Oltu Castle, located in the Oltu district of Erzurum, has been the subject of differing views regarding its date of construction. The widely accepted view suggests that the castle was built in the 4th century BCE (Ünüvar, 1954: 41), while the claim that it was constructed by the Urartians in the 10th century BCE is considered less substantiated (Lonely Planet, 2017). Nevertheless, references to Georgian inscriptions in the castle appeared in the Georgian

newspaper Iveria in 1888, and T. Masalskiy noted that the structure exhibits characteristics of Georgian architecture.

Throughout its history, the castle was used by the Byzantines, the Georgian Kingdom, the Great Seljuks, and the Akkoyunlu, and prior to Ottoman rule, it functioned as one of the key administrative centers of the Samtskhe-Saatabago polity (Bayrak, 1979: 217). Following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878, Oltu was ceded to Russia under the Treaty of Berlin and subsequently became a district center under Russian administration, during which a military barracks was established in the area.

This historical rupture contributed to shaping the perception of Russia within Erzurum's collective memory predominantly around themes of occupation, military domination, and political loss. In this context, Oltu Castle emerges not merely as a military structure but as a historically significant site symbolizing detachment from the Ottoman order, shifting borders, and the experience of external domination within the regional memory.

The Pushkin House can be considered a point of "cultural contact" that diverges from the dominant axis of war and monumentality within Erzurum's collective memory. Indeed, available data regarding the architectural characteristics of this structure remain largely limited to academic and institutional sources. In contrast, Pushkin's textualization of his experiences in Erzurum, as well as the ways in which these texts have been interpreted within Turkish academic literature, provide a more robust foundation for analyzing the perception of Russia (Karaca, 2021: 79).

Pushkin's journey to Erzurum in 1829 represents not merely a geographical displacement but also a reflection of his tension with the political structure of the Russian Empire and his oppositional stance toward it. His aspiration to cross the borders of Russia dates back to his childhood, and the "indescribable emotions" he experienced upon crossing the Arpaçay River transformed into disappointment upon learning that Ottoman lands were under Russian occupation (Pushkin, 2021:10).

In conclusion, in the case of Erzurum, collective memory has been shaped primarily along the axes of war, occupation, and trauma, with the perception of Russia emerging as a collective synthesis of historical experiences. This memory functions not only as a record of the past but also as a dynamic structure that sustains continuity in identity and belonging.

Conclusion

The perception of Russia within the collective memory of Erzurum emerges not merely as a passive reflection of historical events, but rather as a multilayered construct shaped through processes of reinterpretation, transmission, and reproduction within a broader social context and through various cultural mediations. From a collective memory perspective, it becomes evident that traumatic experiences—particularly war, occupation, and forced migration—have played a decisive role in shaping perceptions of Russia in the case of Erzurum.

First, elements of oral culture—such as idioms, folk songs, and narratives—play a significant role in transmitting the perception of Russia across generations. These elements carry the emotional and symbolic dimensions of war and occupation experiences, producing a mnemonic framework that positions Russia as the "other" and as a source of threat. Similarly, literary works and memoirs transform this perception into more systematic narratives; for instance, the accounts found in Kazım Karabekir's memoirs clearly reveal how feelings of distrust and betrayal toward Russia have been embedded in collective memory.

Within the framework of written culture, books, academic articles, and particularly graduate theses produced at Atatürk University demonstrate that the perception of Russia is reconstructed through an institutionalized form of memory production. These studies generally portray Russia as an occupying, expansionist actor that reshapes regional power dynamics, while also highlighting the multidimensional consequences of Russian intervention through themes such as the occupation of Erzurum, forced migration, demographic ruptures, and experiences of captivity. In this respect, the academic literature does not merely analyze historical events but also transforms them into a written component of collective memory, thereby ensuring the continuity of the perception of Russia.

In addition, architectural and spatial elements—such as bastions and structures like the Pushkin House—function as tangible carriers of this memory. These sites render past experiences of occupation and resistance visible through physical space, enabling collective memory to be re-experienced within everyday life. Thus, in Erzurum, the perception of Russia is sustained not only through narratives and texts but also through spatial memory practices. The historical and academic sources examined in this study indicate that Erzurum has been shaped by a recurring cycle of occupation, resistance, and liberation since the nineteenth century. In this process, wars have produced not only military consequences but also demographic, administrative, and socio-

cultural transformations; experiences such as forced migration, captivity, and collective trauma have left deep traces in collective memory. Accordingly, the perception of Russia has become a significant component of Erzurum's social identity as a result of these historical experiences.

In conclusion, the perception of Russia within Erzurum's collective memory constitutes a dynamic structure that is continuously reproduced through oral narratives, written texts, academic knowledge production, and spatial markers. This structure demonstrates that traumatic experiences of the past continue to shape contemporary cultural identity and modes of perception. In this sense, the study reveals that collective memory is not merely a process of remembering the past, but also one of reinterpreting and rearticulating it in the present, thereby explaining how the perception of Russia has been constructed within a framework of historical continuity in the case of Erzurum.

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CHAPTER 4

The Invisible Face of Digitalization: Teacher Labor and Parent Communication in the Grip of Platformization[1]

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Abstract

Although digitalization in education is often framed as a positive transformation in terms of accessibility and technological advancement, it also signals a deeper structural shift that reshapes the organization of teachers' labor, professional boundaries, and pedagogical autonomy. This study aims to examine how teachers' labor is transformed through the increasing migration of interactions among educational stakeholders to commercial digital platforms, drawing on a platformization perspective. The study is designed as a theoretical analysis based on a literature review. Within this framework, the concepts of platformization, the platformization of education, and digital labor are

1 This study is derived from the author's ongoing master's thesis titled "The Impact of New Media and Digitalization on Teacher-Student and Parent Communication: The Case of Isparta"

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addressed holistically. The review reveals that teachers' communication and coordination activities conducted through digital platforms have intensified, blurred the boundaries of working hours, and generated a largely invisible form of digital labor. In particular, the expectation of constant availability has eroded the boundaries between work and private life, constrained pedagogical autonomy, and produced new forms of communicative pressure. This process has not only increased the quantitative workload of teachers but has also transformed their labor into a fragmented, continuous, and highly monitored structure. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that digitalization in education is not merely a technical advancement but a multi-layered transformation that restructures teachers' labor. By highlighting the invisibilization of digital labor and the resulting boundary violations, the study offers a critical contribution to the field.

Keywords: Platformization, Digital Labor, Teacher Labor, Digital Communication

1. Introduction

While traditional educational paradigms primarily treat digitalization as a "tool enhancement," the current situation points toward a deeper structural transformation in which teaching labor is encompassed by digital platforms. Drawing upon Marshall McLuhan's "the medium is the message" approach, digitalization is evaluated not merely as a technical element that accelerates education, but as an environment that restructures the relationships, distances, and forms of labor among educational stakeholders (McLuhan, 1964; Selwyn, 2013). In this framework, while the prominent emphasis on "technological possibilities" and "accessibility" brings the positive aspects of digital transformation to the fore, the socio-psychological costs reflected in teachers' professional lives often remain in the background (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2023). In contrast, findings revealing that teachers work under the pressure of constant accessibility—leading to consequences such as burnout and technostress—demonstrate that the impact of digitalization on labor processes must be addressed more comprehensively (Mellner, 2016).

This study is based on a literature review that systematically evaluates existing studies in order to make sense of the transformation in question. Within this scope, the phenomenon of platformization is addressed alongside its reflections in the field of education, and it is discussed how the process of platformization in education restructures teacher labor (Van Dijck et al., 2023). In particular, the migration of teacher-parent interaction to commercial digital platforms such as WhatsApp is considered one of the concrete manifestations

of this transformation in daily practices. During this process, the digital communication, coordination, and feedback activities conducted by teachers produce an increasingly expanding but often invisible form of digital labor (Fuchs, 2019; Selwyn, 2013).

In this direction, after discussing the concept of platformization and its theoretical implications in the field of education, the study addresses the effects of the platformization process in education on the organization of teacher labor. By examining the emergence of digital labor and the forms of its invisibility, the study evaluates the consequences of this process on teachers' workload, professional autonomy, and work boundaries. Finally, the boundary violations arising in the context of the expectation of constant accessibility and communicative intensification, which have become more prominent with digitalization, are discussed within a holistic analytical framework in light of existing studies.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Platformization and the New Architecture of Education

Platformization is defined as the penetration of platform extensions into the web and the process of making third-party data platform-ready (Helmond, 2015). Today, platformization in online spaces plays a role comparable to—and in some cases, more decisive than—public institutions in the organization and structuring of public and private life. Practices of civic life and, to a certain extent, public policies are shaped in accordance with the operational logic and economic models of these platforms. The "platform society," as conceptualized by Van Dijck et al. (2023), refers to a social order in which social and economic processes are increasingly shaped through global platform ecosystems that are driven by algorithms and function based on data. This concept does not suggest that online platforms create a separate virtual public sphere disconnected from the physical world. On the contrary, the platform society approach reveals that digital platforms have moved to the center of social life and that daily practices are largely shaped by the technical, economic, and managerial infrastructures of these platforms. In this framework, platforms are evaluated not only as tools for communication and interaction but also as fundamental socio-technical structures that reorganize social relations, institutional processes, and decision-making mechanisms (Van Dijck et al., 2023).

The process of platformization is explained by Van Dijck, Poell, and De Waal (2018) through three fundamental components involving datafication,

marketization, and governance. The first is the process of Datafication. Digital platforms transform every kind of user interaction (behaviors, preferences, movements, etc.) into data. This process is not limited only to information consciously shared by users; it also encompasses behavioral data collected through sensors, applications, and tracking tools. The acquired data are processed algorithmically and can be shared with various actors. The second is Marketization. Unlike traditional one-sided market structures, platforms establish two-sided or multi-sided markets among users, content creators, developers, and advertisers. This structure increases the economic power of platforms through network effects and makes value production platform-centric. The final component is Governance. Platforms guide and supervise user interactions through interface designs, algorithmic rankings, and rules of use. At the same time, they control the access of third parties through tools such as APIs and SDKs, and regulate behaviors within the platform via terms of service (Poell et al., 2019).

Digital transformation, addressed within the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, refers to a multi-layered process that involves not only the development of new technological tools but also the acquisition of new skills by individuals to adapt to these technologies. This transformation has led to the restructuring of learning environments in the field of education, making the widespread adoption of hybrid models possible where physical and digital spaces intertwine. In this framework, pedagogical approaches such as flipped classroom, digital collaborative learning, gamification, augmented reality, virtual reality, and mixed reality stand out as applications that make learning processes more flexible, interactive, and student-centered (Arısoy, 2022).

However, digital transformation transforms not only the spatial and methodological dimensions of learning but also the production and distribution forms of content. Opportunities such as personalized learning, the adaptation of content according to individual needs, and individuals being able to determine their own learning speeds become possible thanks to the data-driven analysis capacity offered by digital environments (Segura et al., 2021). This situation contributes to the evolution of learning processes into a more flexible and individualized structure.

Nevertheless, this transformation gains a broader meaning when addressed alongside the process of platformization. Digital tools and applications used in education are increasingly converging around specific platforms; learning processes are shaped by the technical infrastructures, algorithmic guidance, and data collection mechanisms of these platforms (Van Dijck et al., 2023). In this context, hybrid teaching environments are not merely neutral spaces offering

pedagogical innovations; they are becoming part of platform ecosystems that transform user interactions into data and integrate this data into economic and managerial processes.

In this sense, while digital transformation enables the spread of innovative methods in education, the platformization perspective makes visible the power relations, data-driven governance forms, and the restructuring of educational labor operating in the background of this process. When these two processes are considered together, it is understood that digitalization in education is not merely a pedagogical development, but also a process of socio-technical and economic restructuring. Selwyn (2013), who takes a critical approach to educational technologies, states that educational transformation in the digital age stretches traditional hierarchies; however, he points out that the resulting illusion of 'openness' actually creates new mechanisms of control. On the other hand, the fact that boundaries between educational stakeholders have become so permeable carries the risk of turning the teacher's professional identity into a 'constantly accessible' element of the platform. Although the erosion of spatial boundaries emphasized in Castells' (2016) 'network society' theory has established a structure of 'school without space' in education, this deterritorialization blurs ethical boundaries such as privacy and surveillance highlighted by Selwyn (2013), and carries the institutional hierarchy of the school into the teacher's most private sphere, namely their home.

Although the concept of 'participatory culture' proposed by Jenkins (2016) theoretically encourages parents to be more actively involved in educational processes, the dynamics of platformization tend to transform this participation into a digital siege that narrows the teacher's professional space through the imposition of 'constant accessibility.' Selwyn's (2013) critical perspective provides a fundamental basis for understanding how digital networks reduce a teacher's pedagogical autonomy to 'service provision.' While platforms facilitate communication at a technical level, they carry the risk of reducing professional authenticity to an anonymous 'interface performance' by turning the teacher's pedagogical labor into a mechanical element of the platform architecture (Fuchs, 2019; Van Dijck, 2023; Zuboff, 2021).

2.2. Digital Labor and Boundary Violations in Education

Teacher labor stands out as a specific form of labor undergoing transformation within the context of capitalist production relations and commodification processes. Along with the structural changes in the field of education, teaching is gaining a character that is increasingly being placed under surveillance, has a narrowing sphere of autonomy, and is being standardized, moving beyond

being merely a profession that plays a role in social reproduction. This process weakens the character of teacher labor based on intersubjective relations, while also limiting the transformative and emancipatory potential of the profession. At the same time, teaching is being homogenized by being stripped of its socially attributed meanings, and the control mechanisms established over labor processes are strengthening. Alongside transformations in capitalist production conditions, trends of precarity, loss of control, and status erosion are becoming evident in teaching, which belongs to the category of white-collar and professional occupations. This situation renders the validity of theses regarding the expansion of the middle class debatable (Buyruk, 2015).

Another process effective in the transformation of teacher labor is digitalization. Digitalization processes are increasingly blurring the professional boundaries of teacher labor. Rather than being a function reduced merely to the use of technological tools, the digitalization process transforms teaching into a form of labor reshaped by data production, algorithmic alignment, and surveillance practices. In this context, beyond being actors performing pedagogical activities, teachers are becoming data producers integrated into the functioning of digital platforms, content organizers, and performance elements measured by algorithms. This transformation alters both the professional and ethical foundations of the teacher identity, causing elements such as pedagogical intuition, emotional labor, and professional autonomy to fade into the background and their visibility to decrease (Eraslan, 2025). The conceptualization of invisible labor (Fuchs, 2019) points to the erosion of the concept of working hours and the expansion of teachers' workloads in unseen ways. For teachers, this process means that physical presence in the classroom is replaced by a digital presence maintained through screens, constantly monitored, and evaluated through performance metrics. This digital presence is not limited to time and knowledge production; it is also included in a structure where elements such as attention, interaction, and emotional labor become measurable and traceable. Within this framework, teacher labor is repositioned within the attention economy and data-driven evaluation mechanisms, while pedagogical activities are considered alongside algorithmic visibility and performance criteria (Eraslan, 2025).

The digitalization of educational forms and the accompanying process of platformization have put pressure on the pedagogical aspect of teaching, leading teachers to transform into an on-demand service provision (Dutra and Cecílio, 2026). The practicality provided by digital tools in school-parent communication reinforces the expectation of "being accessible at all times" for teachers; this situation, in turn, leads to consequences such as professional burnout and the damage to work-life balance over time. When evaluated

within the framework of Mellner's (2016) boundary management approach, it is observed that digital communication tools make the boundaries between work and private life permeable and blur the distinction between teachers' professional responsibilities and their personal time. This permeability directly affects teachers' rest periods and private spheres.

In this context, it is understood that regulations such as the "right to disconnect," which aims to protect the private lives of employees, are also a significant necessity for the field of education. The responses teachers provide to parent groups outside of working hours are not merely a technical communication practice. These interactions bring along an intense process of unpaid emotional labor that erodes professional boundaries (Hochschild, 1983). Within the framework of platform capitalism, teacher labor is no longer an activity limited only to specific working hours; it transforms into a multi-layered structure expanding with different dimensions such as emotional labor and representational labor. In this sense, the teacher becomes not only a subject who transmits knowledge but also an actor who must manage student and parent expectations, adapt to the algorithmic functioning of platforms, and regulate interactions in digital environments. This transformation carries teacher labor beyond the physical boundaries of the classroom, revealing a form of work that requires being constantly accessible and ready for interaction in the digital environment (Hochschild, 1983).

The discourse of "horizontal communication" and "democratic participation," with which new media tools are frequently associated, can transform in practice into a form of intervention with blurred boundaries that weakens the teacher's pedagogical authority. It has been determined that the sense of artificial proximity created in digital communication strengthens the tendency of parents to interfere in the teacher's professional decision-making areas, such as grading, discipline, and teaching methods. This situation leads digital tools that encourage parental involvement to turn into a structural problem that pushes the professional boundaries of teachers (Thompson et al., 2015). In this context, studies on network-based platforms by Tufekci (2017) and Livingstone (2017) highlight the concepts of the commercialization of privacy and surveillance culture. This situation, which can also be called surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019), implies that digital systems not only analyze user experiences but also reprocess the data obtained from these experiences to generate predictions, guide behaviors, and ultimately convert them into economic value. In educational settings, this approach means that every interaction teachers establish with the system, such as feedback given to students, content uploaded to the system, and time spent on the platform, is recorded as data and becomes part of surveillance processes. This leads to

the redefinition of teacher labor not only as a pedagogical activity but also as an activity based on data production (Zuboff, 2019). Along with digitalization, parent communication channels are transforming into spaces where teacher performance is constantly monitored and evaluated. This transformation paves the way for educational interaction to move away from being a ground for pedagogical sharing and for the relationship between teacher and parent to be redefined within the framework of a service delivery and demand relationship (Selwyn, 2013).

The effects of platform capitalism on teacher labor are not limited only to professional transformation. The process also necessitates a reinterpretation of the ontological relationship individuals establish with their own labor within the digital context. Within this framework, the teacher is not merely an actor producing content on digital platforms but is positioned as a subject evaluated through visibility, interaction, and performance indicators. While this transformation weakens the teacher's pedagogical autonomy, it paves the way for the restructuring of professional identity in line with market-based criteria. However, the hegemonic framework in question does not possess an absolute determinism; through approaches that prioritize critical awareness, ethical sensitivity, and professional autonomy, the teacher has the capacity to question and transform the boundaries imposed by digital labor regimes. In this regard, teacher labor should be reconsidered on the basis of social responsibility, pedagogical ethics, and a transformative understanding of education, beyond algorithmic performance metrics. Therefore, the teacher's role is not limited only to conforming to the system's expectations but can also be defined as critically evaluating and, when necessary, intervening in the ethical and structural boundaries of this system. In this perspective, teaching in the digital age is positioned as a form of critical stance and consciousness rather than merely a profession (Eraslan, 2025).

The reflections of these global dynamics within the context of Turkey take on a more complex appearance when combined with existing cultural norms. The established perception of the "self-sacrificing teacher," merged with the expectation of constant accessibility created by digital communication tools, normalizes the after-hours communication burdens of teachers. Indeed, studies examining teachers' views on parent WhatsApp groups in Turkey reveal that such applications create an intense invisible labor that occupies non-working hours and a pressure to be constantly available (Balcı and Tezel Şahin, 2018).

3. Discussion and Recommendations

The platformization of education emerges as a multi-layered process that transforms teacher labor not only at an instrumental level but also restructures the organization, boundaries, and temporality of labor. The fact that platforms produce ecosystems that rearrange and commercialize social relations rather than being neutral tools leads to the repositioning of teacher labor within this ecosystem in the field of education as well (Van Dijck et al., 2023). This repositioning brings about a work regime that expands through the expectation of constant accessibility, along with the intensification and fragmentation of teacher labor through digital networks (Selwyn, 2014).

In this context, the new work arrangement shaped through instant notifications and constant communication channels, rather than making teacher labor temporally flexible, on the contrary, forces it into a continuity of uninterrupted work. This situation indicates that a new form of control, conceptualized as "tele-pressure," which causes employees to feel an obligation to respond constantly, has also become visible in the field of education (Barber and Santuzzi, 2015). In the context of Turkey, the expectation of parents for constant access to teachers via instant messaging applications further intensifies this pressure, blurring the spatial and temporal boundaries of teacher labor (Balcı and Tezel Şahin, 2018). This leads teaching to transcend its traditionally defined working hours framework and evolve into a deterritorialized and continuous form of labor.

Along with the process of platformization, teacher labor is rearranged through socio-material entanglements and is processed through the rupture patterns of this arrangement. This structure, established through platforms, devices, discourses, and non-human actors, produces new space-time arrangements that simultaneously distribute, intensify, and individualize labor. In this process, teacher labor becomes a practice that gains continuity through various interruptions and reconfigurations. Consequently, labor is not only increasing but also taking on a fragmented, simultaneous, and multi-layered structure (Bergviken Rensfeldt and Player-Koro, 2024).

The reorganization of student assessment and surveillance practices through digital platforms stands out as another significant mechanism that enables the extension and continuity of teacher labor. The obligation of constant data production, record-keeping, and providing feedback makes teacher labor visible while simultaneously rendering it constantly auditable. This situation results in the limitation of pedagogical autonomy and makes teachers' professional

decision-making processes more open to external interventions (Giroux, 1988; Stenhouse, 1975).

Moreover, coordination mechanisms established through calendar tools and time management discourses play a central role in the regulation of teacher labor. While these tools ostensibly offer technical solutions that organize the workflow, in reality, they ensure that labor is more tightly monitored and standardized according to certain norms. Thus, teacher labor is reframed through discourses of individual responsibility and self-management, and institutional control is reproduced in more implicit forms.

When all these processes are evaluated together, it is understood that platformization does not merely create a technical increase in workload for teachers, but also produces a form of invisible digital labor that erodes professional boundaries (Fuchs, 2014; Huws, 2014). Consequences such as the blurring of boundaries between work and private life, the constant expansion of labor, and the increasing emotional/psychological burden indicate that teachers' mental health and professional sustainability are at risk. In contrast, educational institutions and administrative structures do not make the structural effects created by this transformation sufficiently visible and, in most cases, reduce the excessive workload created by platformization to the sphere of individual responsibility.

Finally, the economic dimension of platformization also stands out as an element that cannot be ignored. The fact that educational processes have become dependent on digital platforms increases the influence of big technology companies in this field and leads teacher labor to indirectly produce value within this economic structure (Dutra and Cecílio, 2026). This situation clearly reveals that platformization in education is not only a pedagogical transformation but also a politico-economic one.

Consequently, in order to limit the effects of platformization in education on teacher labor, it is necessary to legally guarantee the "right to disconnect" for teachers at the policy level and to include digital communication activities in official workload definitions by removing them from the category of invisible labor. Considering the communicative pressure and labor intensification created by the expectation of constant accessibility, such regulations appear critical for the sustainability of teacher labor (Van Dijck et al., 2023; Barber and Santuzzi, 2015; OECD, 2021). Furthermore, taking into account the economic and structural dimensions of digital labor, the effects of platform-based work forms on labor processes should be reflected in policy documents (Fuchs, 2014; Huws, 2014).

At the institutional level, it is of great importance that school administrations develop clear protocols regulating digital communication and define parent-teacher interaction within professional boundaries. Additionally, it is recommended to expand digital communication ethics and media literacy initiatives for parents (Balcı and Tezel Şahin, 2018). At the academic level, research aimed at understanding the digitalization of teacher labor should move beyond survey-based approaches, deepening through methods such as digital ethnography, and interdisciplinary perspectives centering on platformization debates should be developed (Selwyn, 2014; Bergviken Rensfeldt and Player-Koro, 2024).

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CHAPTER 5

A Bibliometric Analysis of Graduate Theses on School-Parent Cooperation in Turkey (1986-2025): The Anatomy of an Analog Literature in the Digital Age[1]

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Devrim İnce[3]

Abstract

Academic research on school-parent interaction in Türkiye continues to remain largely within traditional frameworks, despite significant social and technological transformations. This study employs a bibliometric analysis to document this stagnation by examining 72 graduate theses (67 master's, 4 doctoral, and 1 medical specialization) registered in the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) National Thesis Center between 1986 and 2025. The analysis reveals that interest in the subject peaked in 2010 with 11 theses; however, in subsequent years—including the period where digitalization

1 This study is derived from the author's ongoing master's thesis titled "The Impact of New Media and Digitalization on Teacher-Student and Parent Communication: The Case of Isparta"

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became mandatory, such as the pandemic—the annual average has remained limited to 3-4 theses.

The data documents a certain "contextual blindness" within the literature. Almost all of the 72 studies examined continue to interpret communication through formal and institutional procedures, such as "School-Parent Associations" or "parent-teacher meetings." Within the total dataset, the proportion of studies investigating the impact of digital platforms and mobile integration—which are at the heart of today's communication networks—remains below 3%. The findings demonstrate that while school-parent communication has migrated to digital platforms in daily practice, academic literature remains largely confined to an analog framework. This situation indicates an urgent need to re-evaluate the field through the lens of communication sciences.

Keywords: School-Parent Cooperation, Bibliometric Analysis, Graduate Theses, Analog Literature, Digitalization Gap.

1. Introduction

Communication between school and family is recognized as one of the most critical elements influencing the success of an educational system (Aslanargun,2007). Traditionally, this interaction among educational stakeholders has been sustained through conventional methods such as face-to-face meetings, parent conferences, and written correspondence (Aydın, 2010). However, the rise of the network society in the 21st century (Castells, 2010) and the integration of new media tools into the core of daily life have necessitated the migration of school-family communication to digital platforms. Today, interactions between parents, teachers, and students have transcended institutional boundaries and acquired a hybrid character through instant messaging applications and social networks (Bozkurt et al., 2021).

Despite this radical transformation in practice, the extent to which the graduate thesis literature examined in this study has kept pace with such change remains a critical subject of debate. While theoretical discussions in the global literature focus on the accessibility and data-driven interaction created by digitalization (Livingstone, 2019), the sample examined within the Turkish context appears to exhibit a theoretical stagnation in terms of its adaptation speed to this transformation. In particular, the transformative power of technology in education emphasized by Selwyn (2011) struggles to find a corresponding presence in the local literature. By examining graduate theses focused on school-family communication in Türkiye between 1986 and 2025 through a bibliometric lens, this study aims to reveal the "digitalization gap" in the literature with concrete data.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design and Approach

In this research, the bibliometric analysis method, introduced to the literature by Pritchard (1969), was utilized. This method allows for the quantitative analysis of academic trends, publication patterns, and the structural development of literature within a specific discipline or subject area. While designing the research framework, the approach of "qualitative and quantitative analysis of the link between technology and educational research" proposed by Selwyn (2011) was taken as a basis. This approach treats the integration of technological tools into educational practices not merely as a numerical inventory, but as a reflection of the theoretical transformation within the literature. Bibliometric analysis provides a macro-level perspective in terms of tracking the conceptual focal points of the relevant field, rather than just the increase in the number of publications (Donthu et al., 2021). The approach preferred within the scope of this study has made it possible to map the extent to which the 39-year accumulation of knowledge on school-family communication has adapted to technological transformation on an "analog-digital" axis.

2.2. Data Set Creation and Limitations

The studies reached as a result of the scanning were subjected to a preliminary examination to clarify the bibliometric parameters. The examination was based on the 39-year period between 1986 and 2025. The final data set of the research consists of a total of 72 graduate theses, including 67 master's, 4 doctoral, and 1 medical specialization thesis. In creating the data set, the criterion of "directly focusing on the technical, social, or managerial dimensions of communication between school and family" was applied. Through this criterion, it was aimed to objectively reveal the representation levels of traditional and digital interaction practices in the academic field and the transformation trends of these practices over time. In this context, studies that focused on communication practices outside the education system or treated school-family interaction as a secondary element were excluded from the data set.

In order to evaluate the academic distribution of the literature, the 72 theses examined were also classified according to their degree levels. This classification, presented in Table 1, reveals the numerical distribution of master's and doctoral studies within the scope of the research.

Table 1. *Distribution of the Theses Included in the Research by Degree Type*

Thesis Type	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Master's Thesis	67	93.1
Doctoral Dissertation	4	5.5
Medical Specialization	1	1.4
Total	72	100

Source: *Council of Higher Education (CoHE) National Thesis Center. Compiled by the author (2026).*

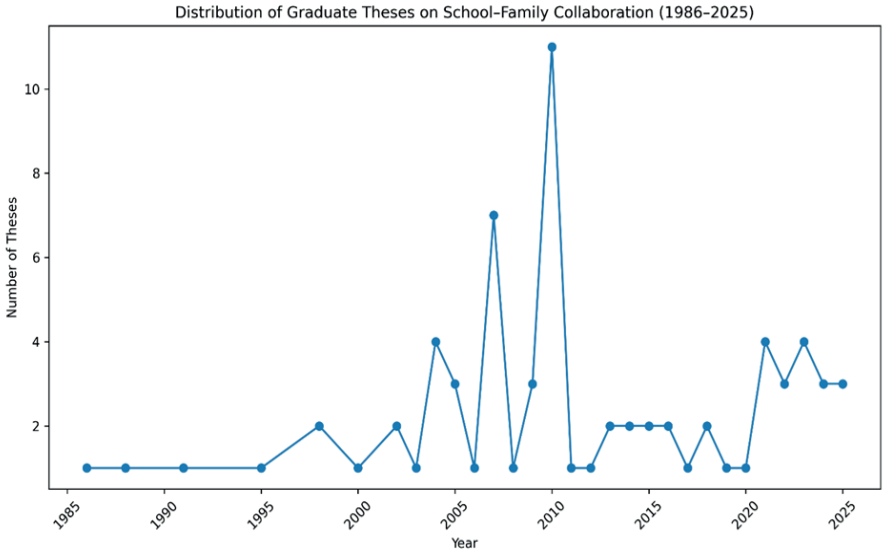
As shown in Table 1, the vast majority of the studies examined are at the Master's level (93.1%). The limited number of doctoral dissertations indicates that the field has not yet been deeply theorized within higher-level academic research. This distribution confirms the need for more comprehensive doctoral studies to bridge the "digitalization gap" identified in this research.

2.3. Data Analysis and Categorization

Selected theses were subjected to thematic content analysis based on the criteria of publication year, graduate level, and the focused communication environment (traditional/analog or digital). In categorizing the studies as "digitally focused," the titles and keywords of the theses served as the primary basis for classification. In this context, the presence of concepts such as "internet," "Web 2.0," "social media," "mobile applications," "digital platforms," and "online communication" within the titles or keywords was queried. The data obtained were interpreted using frequency (f) and percentage (%) analyses to determine the level of adaptation of the literature to technological transformation, and the findings were presented through visualization.

3. Findings

The chronological distribution of the 72 graduate theses examined indicates that interest in the subject of school-family communication gained momentum starting from the mid-2000s. However, this interest represents a quantitative repetition rather than a qualitative transformation.



Graphic 1. Distribution of Graduate Theses on School-Family Cooperation by Years and the Quantitative Course of Digitalization Literature (1986-2025)

Source: Council of Higher Education (CoHE) National Thesis Center. Compiled by the author.

Note: While the x-axis starts from 1985 for visual scaling, the analytical sample begins in 1986.

The data presented in Graphic 1 reflects the course of graduate academic production on school-family cooperation in Türkiye over a period of nearly 40 years. An analysis of the period between 1986 and the early 2000s reveals that the subject held a very limited place in the academic focus, with the number of theses remaining at a level of 1-2 per year.

The most remarkable deviation in the data set is the concentration observed in 2010, reaching 11 theses. This sudden increase overlaps with the period when the institutional foundations of the FATİH Project—one of Türkiye's most comprehensive steps toward technology integration in the education system—were laid, and the vision for digitalization in education (MEB, 2010) entered the public agenda. This data demonstrates that new applications in education and state policies find a rapid response within academic circles.

In the process following this acceleration in 2010, the number of theses followed a fluctuating course, and it was found that in the post-2020 period, studies continued in the band of 3-4 theses per year. Notably, even in theses

completed between 2020 and 2025 (the post-pandemic period), it was identified that the new "psychosocial" space created by digital communication tools was largely ignored. The data obtained from the analysis proves that the literature on school-family cooperation and communication shows resistance to keeping pace with technological speed. For instance, in recent studies such as İçel (2025) and Gökmen (2025), the interaction process is still interpreted through traditional "parent involvement" scales. The findings indicate that the technology-oriented approach initiated a decade ago by Yıldız (2013) and Yavuz (2014) has not reached the expected prevalence in the literature.

In an era where digital tools have permeated every aspect of life, it is striking that academic studies remain focused on physical space and traditional communication methods. This fluctuating course of the 72 examined theses by years reveals that while the literature is mobilized by external factors (such as curriculum changes or technological reforms) in certain periods, it has not yet transformed into a linear and continuous growth trend in quantitative terms, despite the age of digitalization.

Table 2. Distribution of school-family cooperation theses by thematic focus categories

Thematic Focus Category	Number of Theses (n)	Percentage (%)	Featured Authors
Traditional (Analog) Communication / Parent Views	70	97.3%	Kıncal (1991), Koçak (1991), İçel (2025), Gökmen (2025), Karaca (2025)
Digital and Technology-Oriented Communication	2	2.7%	Yıldız (2013), Yavuz (2014)
Total	72	100%	

The full bibliographic details of these two studies, identified as a "digital exception" among the 72 graduate theses, are as follows:

Yıldız, E. P. (2013): "Parent and teacher opinions regarding the use of technology in school-family communication in primary schools" (Atatürk University, Master's Thesis, Thesis No: 343209).

Yavuz, A. (2014): "The effectiveness of web-based applications in school-family cooperation" (Trakya University, Master's Thesis, Thesis No: 364718).

3.1. Discussion of Thematic Distribution

The data in Table 2 reveals with numerical clarity the resistance of the school-family cooperation literature in Türkiye toward technological transformation. The most striking finding of the research is that the proportion of studies placing digitalization and technological tools directly at the focus of research remains at only 2.7% (n=2). All 70 theses, excluding these two pioneering studies, are shaped around "analog" themes such as school-parent association regulations, face-to-face parent meetings, and general barriers to participation. This situation indicates that academic interest, rather than viewing digital tools as a primary communication channel, still evaluates them as an extension of traditional bureaucratic processes.

These two studies, which can be characterized as "digital exceptions" in the literature, were authored by Yıldız (2013) and Yavuz (2014) over a decade ago. Despite the penetration of smartphone usage and mobile communication networks (WhatsApp, e-School, etc.) into every aspect of life in the intervening period, it is observed that no new trend has emerged following in the footsteps of these pioneering works. It has been identified that even the most recent theses completed in 2024 and 2025 (e.g., Gökmen, 2025; Karaca, 2025) do not focus on the new communication atmosphere created by digital platforms (social networks, mobile notifications, etc.) and still define interaction through traditional channels. This table indicates that the school-family cooperation literature in Türkiye is theoretically and methodologically anchored on an 'analog' ground and has yet to fully integrate the dynamics brought by the digital age into its conceptual framework.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study opens to debate both the theoretical and practical dimensions of the position of school-family communication literature in Türkiye in the face of digitalization. The bibliometric analyses conducted (See: *Analysis of Graduate Theses on School-Family Communication in Türkiye*) concretely reveal that the literature remains significantly tied to traditional communication approaches with an overwhelming majority of 97.3%. The data obtained indicates that the academic accumulation in the school-family communication literature does not fully align with the speed of digitalization and maint ains its conventional framework. It is observed that following the initial studies in 2013 and 2014 that centered on digitalization, this theme has not gained the expected continuity in the literature.

This situation demonstrates that despite the rapid proliferation of educational technologies in daily life, interest in the examined academic literature is largely concentrated in traditional fields of study. While communication practices in the network society defined by Castells (2010) undergo a significant transformation, the 72 examined theses continue to be largely based on traditional approaches (Koçak, 1991). This contextual stagnation may limit the potential of the literature to address current transformations.

Furthermore, this gap in the literature makes it difficult to define and discuss the burden of "invisible digital labor" undertaken by teachers at an academic level. This state of constant accessibility that teachers are exposed to via digital platforms is a digital reflection of the "technical control in education" mechanisms emphasized by Apple (2014). When teachers respond to parent demands through WhatsApp groups outside of working hours, they are not merely using a technical tool; they are also exerting intense "emotional labor." As highlighted by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), the teaching profession inherently requires an intense emotional performance; however, digital platforms confine this performance to the screen, increasing the risk of teacher burnout.

In an era where instant messaging networks and digital platforms are becoming widespread in educational institutions, the contextual division and stagnation in the relevant literature are evident, even in recent studies from 2025. While İçel (2025) opens the use of digital platforms for discussion, the fact that Gökmen (2025) still focuses on traditional physical participation barriers highlights this divide. Van Dijck et al. (2018) characterize the platformization of educational institutions not just as a technical change but as the confinement of the public good within an algorithmic logic. This algorithmic logic reconfigures educational processes based on "24/7 accessibility," bringing with it the phenomenon of "tele-pressure." Founded by Barber and Santuzzi (2015), this phenomenon is defined as the teacher feeling a compulsion to respond "instantly" to digital messages. This process can be evaluated as the blurring of the teacher's professional boundaries (Mellner, 2016).

While the boundaries of time and space are clear in traditional parent meetings, platform-based interaction embodies a form of digital labor that is de-spatialized (Fuchs, 2014), moving the concept of working hours into the teacher's personal space. This situation brings about a state of being independent of space but constantly connected to work—conceptualized in the literature as "tetheredness" (Turkle, 2008)—which essentially transforms the teacher's home and personal time into a workspace.

Consequently, as warned by Selwyn (2011), when the place and pace of technology in education are not questioned, educational research faces the danger of being disconnected from practice. This situation reveals the necessity of including concepts such as "digital ethics" in educational management and the "right to disconnect"—which advocates for the individual's right to distance themselves from digital notifications and has gained wide coverage in international literature in recent years—into the discussion grounds of current academic research. It is of great importance that future research closes this analog gap in the literature by focusing on contemporary concepts such as "platformization," "algorithmic management," and "invisible digital labor." Otherwise, teacher labor will face the risk of becoming invisible within a standardized workload under the speed of platforms, and the professional identity will risk dissolving into digital anonymity.

Ethical Declaration: The authors declare that the research was conducted in accordance with ethical standards. Since the study is based on a bibliometric analysis of existing graduate theses available in the public domain (CoHE National Thesis Center), no special ethics committee approval was required for the data collection process.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study. No financial support or grant was received from any institution for the conduct of this research.

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CHAPTER 6

Migration as a Process of Communication and Socialization

Sergün KURTOĞLU[1]

Abstract

This chapter approaches migration not merely as population movement, cultural difference, or economic relocation, but as a multilayered social phenomenon shaped by communication and socialization processes. It is designed as a literature-based conceptual and analytical review, bringing together key theoretical and recent studies on integration, belonging, the public sphere, diaspora, digitalization, and participation. Its main aim is to demonstrate that the difficulties experienced by migrants cannot be explained solely by economic, legal, or cultural differences, but are also shaped by inequalities embedded in communicative encounters, public participation, and socialization processes. The chapter argues that cultural recognition, intra-community solidarity, diasporic ties, digital connections, and limited participation mechanisms may provide migrants with certain forms of support and attachment; however, they do not in themselves produce full social membership unless they create bridges to wider social environments, expand institutional access, and enable migrants to become equal participants in public interaction. In this sense, migration is conceptualized as a reciprocal yet unequal process of communication and socialization. The chapter concludes that the central issue is not merely visibility or self-expression, but the conditions

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under which reciprocal, continuous, and transformative social relations can be established.

Keywords: Migration, Communication, Socialization, Belonging, Public participation, Diasporic ties, Digital mediation

Introduction

Although migration has long been addressed largely in terms of population movement, labour mobility, or cultural difference, this framework no longer appears sufficient on its own. Migration involves not only the movement of people from one place to another, but also the encounter of different social worlds, institutional arrangements, forms of belonging, and patterns of meaning-making. For this reason, migration should be understood not only as a demographic, economic, or cultural phenomenon, but also as a multilayered process that generates communicative and social consequences.

This perspective requires a reconsideration of the nature of the relationship between migrants and receiving societies. Integration is often defined as the migrant's effort to adapt to a new environment. Yet, as Penninx (2003) emphasizes, the process cannot be reduced to the migrant's individual adjustment alone; the institutional structure of the receiving society, the forms of acceptance it offers, and its responses to newcomers are also decisive. Migration, therefore, is not a neutral encounter between equal actors, but a process of socialization that operates reciprocally yet unequally, in which the parties possess different degrees of power, status, and representational capacity. From this perspective, the issue is not merely whether migrants enter the system, but under what conditions they are accepted, in which areas they are constrained, and how the rules of living together are reconstituted.

At this point, explaining migration solely through cultural differences also remains insufficient. As shown by Kaya's (2013) critique of culturalization, Fraser's (1995) distinction between recognition and redistribution, and Yuval-Davis's (2006) discussion of the politics of belonging, the problems that emerge in the field of migration may become visible under the heading of cultural difference, yet they are rooted in deeper social dynamics such as recognition, equal access, representation, discrimination, public participation, and institutional exclusion. For this reason, the fact that migrants become visible within certain cultural or ethnic spaces does not automatically mean that they become stronger, more equal, or more integrated social subjects.

Similarly, the distinction between intra-community ties and broader social membership must be kept clear. Ager and Strang's (2008) distinction between

social bonds, social bridges, and links with institutions demonstrates that the question of migration cannot be explained solely through the migrant's ability to hold on within his or her own immediate environment. Levitt and Glick Schiller's (2004) notion of transnational social fields, in turn, shows that migrants may exist simultaneously within multiple fields of belonging and relationship. Yet unless these multiple forms of attachment generate institutional access, public voice, and equal relations with wider social environments, they may function less as a transformative force than as a limited buffer that makes existing inequalities more bearable.

This chapter addresses these issues through a literature-based conceptual-analytical review. To this end, major theoretical and recent studies on integration, belonging, the public sphere, diaspora, digitalization, participation, and socialization are evaluated together. The aim here is not simply to summarize individual approaches, but to establish conceptual relations among different lines of literature and to show that the difficulties experienced by migrants arise not only from economic, legal, or cultural differences, but also from the quality of communicative encounters, the forms of institutional access available to them, and the limits of public participation.

Within this framework, the chapter first repositions migration along the axis of communication and socialization; it then discusses the limits of cultural recognition, the distinction between intra-community solidarity and broader social membership, and the opportunities as well as the limits of diasporic and digital ties. Ultimately, the central argument of the chapter can be summarized as follows: the main issue in migration is not merely mobility, visibility, or the possibility of self-expression. What is decisive is the extent to which migrants are able to establish reciprocal, continuous, and transformative relations across different social fields, the extent to which they can be recognized as equal public subjects, and the conditions under which a shared social world can genuinely be shared.

1. Migration, Integration, and Socialization

The principal actors of migration are individuals and groups who are obliged to communicate with one another, yet who differ significantly in their political, cultural, and socioeconomic codes. For this reason, although a certain degree of communication exists between migrants and receiving societies, this communication often does not take the form of an equal, symmetrical relationship grounded in shared meanings. The inability of the parties to attribute similar meanings to the same messages weakens not only everyday interaction but also the public basis of living together.

From this perspective, migration should be understood not only as a demographic or economic movement, but also as a social process that generates communicative and public consequences. The issue is therefore not one-sided: on the one hand, there is the migrant's problem of adaptation and socialization; on the other, there is the challenge for the receiving society to transform its own institutional structure in accordance with a new social reality. As the OECD (2024a, p. 7) also notes, social integration is a two-way process that involves not only migrants' efforts to adjust to a new environment, but also the acceptance of and equal treatment by the host society.

International migration is an economic, political, cultural, and demographic process that operates across different nation-states, different social positions, and multilayered ties. Yet within this multilayered structure, while political and economic issues are often treated as more visible and manageable, the social dimension appears more complex, diffuse, and resistant. This is because migration does not merely generate population movement; it also transforms role distributions, status relations, forms of everyday interaction, and schemes of social meaning-making.

For this reason, reading migration solely through labour supply, wage differentials, or the possibility of return is often inadequate. At a certain point, migration comes to be understood not simply as an economic movement, but as a process that reorders everyday life, social boundaries, forms of belonging, and modes of public existence. This makes it necessary to approach migration not only as a movement of labour, but also as a struggle over meaning, recognition, and position. As Penninx (2003) emphasizes, integration is not merely a matter of migrants adapting on their own, but a multilayered process involving their acceptance by society both as individuals and as groups. Migration must therefore be understood as a process shaped not only by migrants' own efforts, but also by the institutional and social responses of the receiving society.

In this context, the changing character of labour migration over time shows that migration should be understood not only in terms of moving bodies or labour power, but also in terms of displaced lifeworlds. Over time, migration ceases to be merely an economic relocation and becomes a more complex social process that affects social relations, value systems, and the construction of identity. The OECD's (2024a, p. 1) recent framework likewise indicates that social integration should no longer be assessed solely through economic indicators, but also through such dimensions as identity, belonging, discrimination, intergroup interaction, attitudes, and civic participation. In this respect, migration is not only a matter of incorporation into working life, but also a question of social acceptance and public presence.

As the migration experience deepens, the issue of identity becomes more pronounced. Migrants carry the traces of the social and cultural context from which they come, while at the same time confronting the norms, expectations, and boundaries of the environment in which they now live. Yet this process does not transform migrants alone; members of the receiving society are also compelled to redefine their own positions in response to new forms of social contact, changing role distributions, expectations, and modes of coexistence. Migration, therefore, cannot be explained solely in terms of migrants' adaptation or solely in terms of the host society's response. It must be understood as a process of social interaction that reshapes the worlds of meaning, forms of belonging, and mutual perceptions of both sides. From this perspective, neither migrant life nor the everyday life of the host society should be seen as passive spaces suspended between two fixed structures; rather, both are forms of social existence shaped through dynamics of mutual contact, adjustment, distancing, and repositioning. This in turn shows that integration is not simply a linear process, but a multidimensional and multilayered one that may generate unequal effects for both sides.

At this point, it is insufficient to approach migration solely as a matter of individual adaptation. Integration is not a neutral encounter between the individual and society based on equal power relations. As Penninx (2003) points out, the parties involved in this process are not in fact equal partners; the institutional structure of the receiving society and its responses to newcomers play a more decisive role in shaping the process. For this reason, explaining the difficulties experienced in the migration process solely through cultural difference or the expression of identity is not sufficient in itself. Such an explanation risks rendering structural inequalities between the parties invisible. What matters is not only how institutional arrangements operate in the fields of education, housing, employment, law, representation, and public participation, but also how the receiving society responds to this new social reality through its boundaries, expectations, and mechanisms of adjustment. The issue, therefore, is not simply whether migrants enter the system, but the degree to which both sides accept one another under changing social conditions, the areas in which they maintain distance, and the ways in which they reconstruct the rules of living together.

Integration should be considered not only in functional domains such as employment, housing, or language acquisition, but also through intra-community ties, relations between different groups, and connections with institutions. In this respect, the framework developed by Ager and Strang provides an important theoretical basis. The authors distinguish ties within the same group as social bonds, ties across groups as social bridges, and the

connections between individuals and state structures as social links (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 181). This distinction shows that migration is not merely a matter of individual adjustment or cultural difference, but part of a broader process shaped by the conditions under which social membership, reciprocal contact, and institutional access become possible, as well as the conditions under which they are constrained. Accordingly, the forms of adjustment developed by receiving societies in response to new forms of diversity, the boundaries they preserve, and the ways in which they redefine the rules of living together constitute a central axis of discussion.

It is insufficient to explain migration solely through cultural differences; in some cases, culture may also function as a framework that obscures deeper social and political tensions. These tensions are not one-sided. The process is shaped not only by migrants' position within the social and public sphere of communication, but also by the perceptions, anxieties, expectations of adjustment, and institutional responses that receiving societies develop in the face of new forms of diversity. For this reason, understanding migration requires considering not only culture, identity, and belonging, but also acceptance, recognition, equal access, discrimination, participation, and the problems of reciprocal socialization together. The OECD's (2024a, p. 1; 2024b, p. 11) reports likewise show that integration policies are increasingly shifting toward the promotion of active participation, improved access to integration services, belonging, anti-discrimination, and questions of attitudes and values. This suggests that migration should now be understood not merely as a matter of adaptation, but as a question of reciprocal social membership and the capacity to live together.

What is decisive in debates on migration is not only culture, identity, and belonging, but also the need to consider acceptance, recognition, equal access, participation, and the dynamics of reciprocal socialization together. What matters here is not simply how migrants enter the system, but how the institutions, public spheres, and everyday modes of interaction of the receiving society respond to this new social reality. For this reason, migration should be understood neither solely as a matter of individual adaptation nor solely as a matter of structural belonging, but as a process of communication and socialization that operates reciprocally, through the mutual transformation of different actors, institutions, and social environments, while remaining shaped by inequality.

2. Multiculturalism, Recognition, and the Limits of Culturalization

Multiculturalist discourse does not, in every case, produce a genuine basis for equality or social transformation in the sphere of social and public communication. On the contrary, in some cases it may encourage migrants to turn inward toward their own cultural milieu while pushing intercultural communication and the deepening of a shared public sphere into the background. As Kaya (2013, pp. 63–65) also emphasizes, the process at work here is often the redefinition of what is social and political in cultural terms, that is, a form of culturalization. In such a situation, social tensions and problems of unequal participation begin to be read solely through the lens of cultural difference; this can obscure both the structural problems experienced by migrants and the difficulties faced by receiving societies in building a shared life. Kaya (2013, p. 63) further underlines that multicultural integration policies and the discourse of tolerance remain insufficient to mobilize migrants and their children politically. The central issue, then, is not simply the side-by-side existence of cultures, but whether such coexistence can generate mutual recognition, shared public interaction, and sustainable socialization.

Cultural recognition and social membership are not the same thing. As Fraser (1995, p. 68) points out, justice cannot be grounded solely in the demand for cultural recognition, because economic inequality and cultural misrecognition often operate not as separate processes but as interrelated ones that reinforce each other. For this reason, cultural recognition alone does not provide an equal and sustainable basis for socialization, either for migrants or for receiving societies. The issue is not merely whether cultural expression is recognized, but whether such recognition generates equal participation, voice, and shared public membership. Migration, therefore, must be discussed not only in terms of cultural recognition, but also in relation to redistribution, representation, and equal participation. Otherwise, cultural recognition remains a limited solution that obscures structural inequalities without eliminating them.

Efforts to contain the tensions arising from disruptions in social and public communication may also generate a dynamic that encourages migrants to turn toward alternative spaces of expression. In this context, multiculturalist discourse may appear to offer migrants the opportunity to express themselves through their cultures; yet such expression often does not translate into political and public equality. As Abadan-Unat (2002, p. 201), drawing on Radtke's assessment, notes, multiculturalist discourse brings migrants' folkloric elements to the fore and, in doing so, opens up only the cultural sphere as a site of struggle, while the possibilities of forming interest groups and obtaining

political rights are not recognized to the same extent. In this case, the sphere of cultural expression provides migrants with a limited ground for recognition and attachment, yet it does not resolve broader problems of social and public equality. For the receiving society, in turn, this may function as a symbolic channel of relief that postpones more difficult and transformative encounters. As a result, rather than deepening reciprocal socialization and shared public interaction, a narrower mode of relation may emerge in which the parties recognize one another only within more limited and controlled spaces.

The effects of multiculturalist discourse cannot be explained solely in terms of cultural orientation; the broader mental and social disruptions generated by globalization are also decisive in this process. Harvey's (1990, p. 240) conceptualization of time-space compression suggests that processes transforming the objective qualities of time and space also reshape the ways in which people perceive the world and represent it to themselves. From this perspective, as uncertainty and insecurity increase, both migrants and members of receiving societies may become more inclined to turn toward symbolic spaces that appear more familiar, more controlled, and more secure. For this reason, multiculturalist discourse may function not only as a language of recognition, but also as a limited mechanism of relief that postpones more difficult and transformative encounters. Yet insofar as this relief fails to build genuine bridges across different public spheres, it may keep the parties within narrower and more controlled fields of relation rather than deepening reciprocal socialization.

Behind this process lie not only cultural preferences, but also broader structural and global dynamics. As Sassen (1996, p. 11) argues, international migration is embedded in wider geopolitical and transnational economic dynamics; moreover, migration is, at least in part, also the outcome of the actions of governments and major economic actors in receiving countries. Within this framework, multiculturalist discourse should be understood not merely as a form of cultural recognition, but as part of a broader field of orientation linked to transnational economic and political arrangements. From this perspective, what is decisive is not simply the spaces of expression toward which migrants turn, but the global power relations, political frameworks, and economic structures within which these orientations are shaped.

Becoming visible within the cultural sphere does not, in itself, mean social acceptance or equal public presence. In this respect, the framework developed by Ager and Strang provides an important theoretical foundation. The authors distinguish ties within the same group as social bonds, ties across groups as social bridges, and connections between individuals and state structures as

social links (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 181). This distinction shows that migration should be understood not only through the migrant's cultural visibility, but also through the relationships established with different social groups and the connections developed with institutions. The issue is not simply whether a group can express itself within its own milieu, but whether this gives rise to relationships with wider social environments, reciprocal interaction, and public membership.

3. Belonging, Structural Marginality, and Unequal Inclusion

Migrants' inability to find a full place within the public sphere is not only a matter of legal status or economic position; it is also related to how belonging is constructed. As Yuval-Davis (2006, pp. 197, 205) points out, belonging is not merely a condition of being in a place, but an affective attachment associated with feeling at home and feeling safe; by contrast, the politics of belonging concerns the political projects that determine who is counted as inside and who as outside. For this reason, the issue is not only migrants' adaptation, but also whom the receiving society regards as a legitimate member and whom it accepts only in a distant or conditional manner. From this perspective, there is a significant difference between being culturally recognized and being genuinely accepted as socially belonging. When this gap remains unclosed, equal membership and reciprocal socialization cannot be fully realized.

Reading contemporary migration solely through singular ethnic communities or static migrant groups is becoming increasingly insufficient. Vertovec's (2007, pp. 1024–1025) conceptualization of super-diversity shows that contemporary migration is shaped not only by ethnic origin, but by multiple interacting variables such as legal statuses, rights and restrictions, labour market experiences, gender and age profiles, spatial distribution, and the responses of local service providers. For this reason, explaining migration solely through culture cannot adequately account for the different legal positions, class differentiations, and unequal possibilities of socialization that coexist within the same social space. The issue is not merely the encounter of different cultures, but the unequal convergence of different statuses, expectations, and possibilities for public participation within the same social terrain. This turns migration, beyond earlier multiculturalism debates, into a more complex question of social stratification and reciprocal participation.

Migrants' inability to find full recognition in the public sphere is not only the result of external barriers, but also of sustained pressure to adapt and the experience of uncertainty. As Sedikides et al. (2009, pp. 361–363) show,

migrants continually encounter economic, cultural, and social barriers in the new society, as well as social difficulties such as stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination; this cumulative condition increases negative affect and anxiety, both of which are fuelled by uncertainty about how everyday life can be sustained in the new society. For this reason, migrants' turn toward cultural memory, the past, or familiar symbolic frameworks should be read not only as the preservation of traditional belonging, but also as a search for psychological balance. In other words, cultural withdrawal is not always an ideological choice; more often, it is a compensatory form of attachment developed in response to uncertainty, exclusion, and devaluation.

However, this form of attachment does not always produce a transformative force. As the same authors note, nostalgia and a return to cultural memory may serve for migrants as a resource that alleviates acculturative stress and strengthens positive affect and the perception of social support; yet in some cases this resource functions merely as an aspirin, soothing not the causes of the problem but its symptoms, and, when intensified, may foster separation rather than integration (Sedikides et al., 2009, p. 370). For this reason, withdrawal into the cultural sphere, while it may partly preserve the migrant's subjective sense of integrity, cannot be regarded as a lasting solution that frees the individual from structural inequality. In Antonsich's (2010, pp. 644–645) framework, belonging refers, on the one hand, to the personal and intimate feeling of being at home in a place, and, on the other, to the discursive-political processes that construct forms of socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion. Accordingly, the fact that migrants may feel relatively secure within their own culture does not mean that they are genuinely included socially; it may only render the pressure produced by inequality more bearable.

The findings of Brance et al. (2024, pp. 8, 16) show that, for migrants, group belonging and continuity of social identity provide important resources for psychological well-being; however, when exclusion and discrimination persist, the process of developing a dual identity becomes more difficult, particularly for later generations. From this perspective, it is important for migrants to find moral support within their cultural milieu; yet this support remains limited unless it is accompanied by equal interaction with the majority society, social support, and institutional acceptance. For this reason, forms of multicultural recognition may offer migrants a sphere of relief and self-respect, but when they fail to produce public equality and shared social membership, they remain a limited compensatory mechanism. The issue is not simply whether migrants are able to express themselves, but whether that expression is transformed into equal rights, representational power, and reciprocal recognition.

For this reason, it is insufficient to read the problems experienced by migrants solely as matters of cultural incompatibility or individual inadequacy. A significant part of the issue concerns the level at which migrants are positioned within the social structure. As Abadan-Unat (1985, pp. 4–5), drawing on Hoffmann-Nowotny, argues, migration often produces a new stratification beneath the existing structure of the receiving society; while this process facilitates upward mobility for the native population, it creates an undercasting/structural marginality that keeps migrants in lower layers. In such a situation, migrants' inability to fully enter the public sphere becomes not only a result of externally imposed prejudice, but also a boundary generated by social stratification itself. Thus, while migrants are incorporated into the system as a necessary labour force, they are simultaneously kept in a position from which they cannot settle on equal terms within the central public and institutional spheres of that system.

Migrants' position in working life is instructive in explaining why they often remain limited in the public sphere as well. Recent comprehensive assessments show that migrants are more heavily concentrated in low-paid and temporary jobs in the labour market, experience skill erosion and qualification mismatch, and become more vulnerable because of language barriers and legal constraints (Fasani, 2024, pp. 10, 21, 25, 28). In such a structure, migrants are not only placed in lower layers economically; they are also constrained in terms of exercising their rights, intervening in institutional relations, and constituting themselves as equal public subjects. For this reason, working life is not merely a sphere in which migrants secure their livelihood, but one of the primary sites in which their social marginality and vulnerability are reproduced.

The fact that migrants may be able to continue certain cultural and everyday practices freely does not always strengthen their desire to participate in wider public spheres. In some cases, this limited freedom may, on the contrary, turn into a mechanism of relief that weakens from the outset the demand to enter broader social arenas. Hirschman's (1970, pp. 34, 37) concept of voice is illuminating here: when the possibilities of exit narrow or disappear, the main remaining option is voice; yet for that voice to be effective, it depends not only on dissatisfaction but also on the continuation of a relationship that can still be influenced. This is precisely where the problem crystallizes for migrants: for economic and social reasons, exit is often not a realistic option; yet when the capacity to produce voice within the workplace, institutions, and public relations also remains limited, what emerges is less a claim to rights than a silent adaptation. For this reason, the fact that migrants are left relatively free in certain spheres does not always produce empowerment; at times, it may generate a deeper form of silencing.

This silencing does not mean that migrants are socially included. In Marshall's (1950, pp. 10–11, 27–28, 41) classic formulation, citizenship requires not only recognition before the law, but also the joint operation of civil, political, and social elements; moreover, citizenship also entails a direct sense of community membership grounded in attachment to a common world. For this reason, migrants' participation in the process of production alone, their visibility in everyday life, or their recognition within their own cultural milieu does not in itself amount to full social membership. If migrants cannot enter different public spheres on equal terms, cannot have a say in matters that concern them, and are not regarded as legitimate members of the shared social world, then what is at stake is not membership but a limited form of inclusion. The issue, therefore, is not only whether migrants are granted rights, but whether they can become one of the constitutive parties of common social life.

This limited inclusion cannot be explained solely by a lack of emotional belonging. As Yuval-Davis (2006, pp. 204–205) also points out, the politics of belonging concerns not only who is counted as inside or outside, but also the participatory dimension of citizenship and the issues of status and entitlement that membership entails. For this reason, the fact that migrants are visible in everyday life or accepted within their own milieu does not in itself mean that they have become equal members of the shared social world. What is decisive is the level at which they are able to participate, the status through which they are recognized, and the rights through which membership is concretized.

4. Homeland Ties, Diaspora, and Unequal Attachment

Migrants' position cannot be understood solely within the boundaries of the society in which they settle. As Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004, pp. 1003, 1010) show, migrants live within transnational social fields that stretch across borders; within these fields, people develop different forms of attachment through both actual social relations and everyday practices, as well as through conscious markers of belonging. For this reason, migrants' turn toward ethnic, religious, or cultural spheres is not always simply a withdrawal, but may at times be an attempt to hold on within multiple spheres at once. Yet when such attachment does not produce equal public membership, it may function not as a force that empowers migrants, but as a psychological and social buffer that renders existing inequality more bearable. In other words, even if migrants find a space of cultural expression, they may still remain in a limited position in institutional and public terms.

In classical migration literature, ties with the homeland have been treated not as a deviation that prevents migrants from becoming fully incorporated into the society in which they settle, but as a normal part of the migration experience. The transnationalism approach in particular has emphasized that migrants can live simultaneously both in the country where they settle and within a social field connected to the society of origin; accordingly, incorporation into the new society and ties with the homeland are not necessarily mutually exclusive processes (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004, pp. 1003, 1010). Within this framework, homeland ties have been understood not merely in terms of longing for return or economic transfers, but as a multilayered form of attachment reproduced through familial and social relations, everyday practices, and conscious markers of belonging (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1003). From this perspective, migrants' maintenance of ties with the homeland is not an exceptional condition, but a process that is expected to some extent and that can operate alongside incorporation into the new society.

Migrants' maintenance of ties with the homeland should not automatically be seen as a liberating process. As Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2003, pp. 2, 3) point out, the ties migrants sustain between here and there are often shaped not outside the state system, but rather within its boundaries and regulations; accordingly, these ties do not always generate a pure sphere of autonomy. In this respect, migrants may experience a double-sided entrapment within both the social hierarchies of the country in which they settle and the ongoing political, emotional, and symbolic ties to the homeland. In such a situation, turning toward an ethnic or religious milieu may provide a temporary relief that substitutes for genuine equality; yet it does not necessarily facilitate migrants' participation in different public spheres, the development of new perspectives, or their transformation into subjects capable of making claims to rights. For this reason, it is important to keep open the distinction between migrants' ability to find a space for cultural expression and their being accepted as equal in social and political terms.

It is not analytically accurate to treat ties maintained with the homeland, in every case, as natural relationships that emerge spontaneously and can be explained solely through emotional attachment. Recent diaspora literature shows that both receiving and sending states increasingly regard diasporas, and the relations established with them, as a strategic resource and a field of policy. Accordingly, relations with the diaspora are shaped not only through cultural attachment and emotional continuity, but also through political, institutional, and social forms of direction. In this context, Newland (2022, p. 1) shows that integration and diaspora engagement are often treated in practice as separate policy domains, even though they are in fact processes

that affect one another. Similarly, Klekowski von Koppenfels (2015) notes that sending states in particular have increasingly come to regard their diasporas as a resource capable of generating national capacity and influence, and have moved toward mobilizing these ties in a more deliberate manner. Within this framework, homeland ties may provide migrants with moral support, continuity, and a sense of belonging; however, unless they are combined with opportunities that expand migrants' channels of communication, deepen their socialization, and connect them to wider networks of public relations, they may function less as a means of transforming their structural position than as a mechanism of governance that keeps them within certain symbolic and identity-based boundaries.

Among contemporary migrants, ties with the homeland may partly move away from forms typical of classical first-generation migration, such as regular remittances, expectations of return, and sustained political orientation, and take on more selective, communicative, and contextual forms of relation. These ties do not disappear altogether; rather, they may weaken and be reshaped depending on patterns of language use within the family, modes of communication, and historical conditions. In this context, some studies argue that the non-use of the homeland language within the family among diaspora individuals is associated with the weakening of emotional ties to the homeland and the growing superficiality of political affinity toward the current regime (Xu et al., 2026, pp. 6, 7). For this reason, it seems more accurate to treat attachment to the homeland not as an essential and unchanging category, but as a dynamic relationship that changes form according to historical conditions.

The continued existence of homeland ties today does not mean that migrants can more easily enter wider public spheres. For this reason, the issue is not simply whether these ties persist, but which public spheres they open migrants toward and within which spheres they keep them. As recent participation literature shows, migrants, and especially newcomers, still have limited opportunities in terms of access to the public sphere, contact, and making their voices heard; effective participation is made more difficult by the lack of sufficient contact networks and experience (Rassoul et al., 2024, p. 7). In this respect, the continuation of communicative or emotional ties with the homeland does not automatically produce equal social membership for migrants; at times, it merely facilitates their holding on within narrower and safer spaces.

There are also studies showing that ties with the homeland have taken new forms through digitalization. Diaspora youth now relate to the homeland not only through maintaining family ties or economic transfer, but also through

digital media, peer networks, and leisure practices (Anschütz & Cheung Judge, 2025, p. 2). This suggests that the relationship with the homeland can take the form not of a fixed and linear loyalty, but of a selective, intra-generational, and continually reconstituted mode of attachment.

5. Public Visibility, Representation, and Unequal Participation

If the migrant's relief within certain symbolic spheres does not bring them into relation with different social environments, generate new perspectives, or expand their capacity to have a say in matters that concern them, it remains a limited compensatory mechanism. As Fraser (2007) emphasizes in her discussion of publicity, the issue is not only how the public sphere functions, but also who is counted as a legitimate part of that sphere; in other words, the central question is for whom participatory equality actually holds. For this reason, there is no necessary link between migrants' being culturally recognized and their being able to enter different public spheres. Visibility may increase; yet if that visibility does not turn into reciprocal interaction, voice, and the possibility of constructing a shared public world, migrants remain confined within a limited environment.

At this point, it is not sufficient to read migrants' turn toward ethnic, cultural, or diasporic spheres merely as the continuation of belonging. At times, this orientation may be shaped within a one-sided narrative order that limits migrants' ability to compare the difficulties they experience within broader social contexts and to relate to different public environments. As Crawley et al. (2016, p. 13) show, the limited presence of migrant voices in the media makes it more difficult for the public to understand migration as a complex and multilayered social phenomenon; when the debate becomes confined to borders, numbers, and control, the human and social consequences of migration are pushed into the background. Similarly, Maneri et al. (2023, p. 51) show that the voices of migrants and subsequent generations do not enter the public sphere spontaneously; rather, they gain public resonance only through organized efforts, struggles over representation, and demands for visibility. In such a situation, the problem is not only that migrants cannot speak, but that others continually speak on their behalf; in other words, migrants are prevented from bringing their own experience into the public sphere within a comparative and critical framework.

Such stereotypical representations produce a framework in which refugees are assessed not in relation to their specific social experiences, but through pre-established categories. As Pandır (2020, p. 104) shows, dominant and

stereotypical representations of refugees facilitate processes of social exclusion and conflict by reinforcing prejudice and negative attitudes toward them; moreover, these exclusionary effects operate through representational procedures such as victimization, depoliticization, dehumanization, marginalization, homogenization, and de-individualization. In this way, communication ceases to function as a process that enables mutual learning and the formation of new social relations, and instead becomes a mechanism through which pre-produced patterns are recirculated. This suggests that the representational logic clearly visible in the context of refugees also carries the potential to produce generalizing and exclusionary frameworks in broader debates on migration.

However, this process is neither absolute nor one-sided; for this reason, the solution cannot be reduced solely to migrants' ability to express themselves. As Özçürümez et al. (2020, pp. 6, 14) emphasize, in the context of forced migration, social cohesion and socialization can be strengthened only through meaningful social interaction; direct contact also has the potential to reduce out-group prejudice and threat perceptions between migrants and non-migrants. The core issue, therefore, is not simply whether migrants can speak within certain cultural milieus, but whether a ground of interaction can be established in which they are able to encounter different social environments, their voices are not absorbed into one-sided narratives, and the majority society is likewise open to such encounters. In other words, the problem of communication and socialization cannot be explained solely by migrants' withdrawal into themselves or solely by the exclusionary stance of the host society; rather, the problem lies in the fact that an interactional order that is reciprocal yet asymmetrical often produces fixed narratives instead of genuine encounter.

This observation is also supported by the contact literature. As Pettigrew and Tropp (2006, p. 766) show in their meta-analytic assessment, intergroup contact generally has the capacity to reduce prejudice, and this effect can also be observed across different types of groups and different contexts. In a later study, the same authors show that this effect is related not only to the existence of contact itself, but also to contact's ability to reduce anxiety and increase empathy (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008, pp. 928–929). What is decisive, therefore, is not merely whether groups come into contact, but under what conditions such contact takes place, whether it reduces anxiety between the parties, and whether it produces a more equal relational ground. Otherwise, encounters may increase, yet such encounters may remain at the level of superficial contact rather than dissolving stereotypes. Green et al. (2020, pp. 640, 642), in their comparative study of 20 European countries, likewise show that the threat-reducing effect of contact with migrants may vary depending on the nature of integration policies.

Although migrants' ability to express themselves more comfortably within certain cultural or intra-community spheres may at first appear to support socialization, this relief does not always translate into broader social interaction. As Zhang et al. (2023, pp. 1, 7, 8) show in their review, community participation may serve a positive function by meeting migrants' immediate needs and supporting psychological integration; however, integration within the community does not necessarily amount to integration into the wider society, and when meaningful encounters remain weak, it does not automatically contribute to broader social integration. For this reason, migrants' sense of relief within their cultural milieu does not mean that they are able to enter different social spheres on equal terms; on the contrary, in some cases this relief may turn into a limited compensatory mechanism that relegates the need to open up to wider public spheres to a secondary position.

As Fogelman (2023, p. 12) shows, minority difference is in some cases transformed into an issue to be resolved within the private sphere, rather than being addressed as a matter of public equality and shared representation; instead of producing a visible and equal ground of encounter in the public sphere, difference is drawn into a more limited and manageable domain. This is important for explaining why migrants may be drawn into ethnic or religious spheres. Although migrant difference may be recognized to a certain extent, the fact that this difference often results in migrants disappearing from view in the public sphere points not to a socially expansive form of reciprocity, but to a controlled procedure of relief.

Digital networks do not automatically eliminate the limited sphere of interaction available to migrants. As recent social capital literature shows, even as digital interactions increase, face-to-face encounters remain critical for building bridges, developing trust, and generating broader social ties (Roskruge & Poot, 2024, p. 3). For this reason, the problem of communication and socialization lies in the fact that migrants' voices often circulate within narrower and safer environments, while their relations with different social spheres remain weak; digital networks may in some cases mitigate this limitation, but they cannot overcome it on their own.

At this point, it is insufficient to view migrants' turn toward ethnic or diasporic spheres merely as a matter of individual preference, emotional habit, or cultural loyalty. Diasporic ties are often not simply natural networks of belonging developing from below, but also fields shaped by states and institutions. As Gamlen (2006, p. 21) points out, diaspora policies consist of various state measures aimed at reproducing citizen-sovereign relations with populations abroad, and they may function as part of broader efforts to expand

the state's room for political and economic manoeuvre. From this perspective, migrants' maintenance of ties with the homeland cannot always be regarded as a purely spontaneous attachment; at times, these ties may become an order of attachment that is institutionally encouraged, symbolically reproduced, and politically directed.

Moreover, this process is not always harmonious or unproblematic. As Dolea (2024, p. 6) shows, to think of the relationship between the state and the diaspora solely through the axis of loyalty may render invisible the diversities, tensions, and differences of interest both within diasporas themselves and in their relations with the state. For this reason, the state's turn toward the diaspora does not automatically produce a common and coherent social orientation. As a result, migrants may remain under a double-sided yet unequal direction, caught between the limited relations they establish with the society in which they settle and the expectations produced by the homeland. In such a situation, the ethnic or diasporic sphere may function, on the one hand, as a refuge providing security and continuity, while, on the other, turning into a framework that limits migrants' capacity to enter broader social encounters, develop different perspectives, and acquire new public positions.

In this situation, migrants' position is defined not only by their inability to find an adequate place here, but also by their inability to continue existing there in its former form. As Veikou and Siapera (2017, p. 119), drawing on Sayad, emphasize, migration produces a rupture and a sense of disorder in the individual; migrants, on the one hand, leave a void in the society of origin and, on the other, come to occupy a liminal position as non-full members in the country where they settle. For this reason, the continuation of ties with the homeland does not mean that migrants preserve their former wholeness there unchanged; rather, it places them in an intermediate position, doubly constrained between two social worlds, moving between them yet remaining bound to both through incomplete, asymmetrical, and continually renegotiated relations.

In such an intermediate position, entry into different public spheres does not occur automatically either. As Vaiou and Kalandides (2009, p. 12) show, migrants' presence in the public sphere does not always create a relational practice in which they can produce direct speech; more often, it gives rise to an order in which others speak on their behalf. According to the authors, migrants' presence and everyday practices compel them to engage with the political world; yet it is precisely at this point that actors who will speak for them and speak against them also quickly intervene (Vaiou & Kalandides, 2009, p. 12). For this reason, migrants' becoming visible is not the same as

their becoming public subjects. More often, migrants remain within an indirect and limited form of publicness, unable to participate directly and on equal terms in different social spheres.

This limitation may persist even when mechanisms of participation are established. Evaluations in the Council of Europe volume show that consultative and participatory mechanisms directed at migrants may, in some cases, reproduce exclusion and political powerlessness rather than enhancing genuine participation (Martiniello, 2000, p. 79). It is also emphasized that discussions of migrants' social and political participation often focus on their cultural and religious backgrounds, while paying insufficient attention to how the institutions of the host society shape that participation (Soysal, 2000, p. 65). The issue is not merely whether a space of expression is opened to migrants, but whether these spaces are capable of increasing their political and social influence (Martiniello, 2000, p. 82). When this does not occur, migrants cannot move beyond a position of subjecthood in which they are confined to limited environments, made visible only within certain identity representations, and prevented from becoming equal participants in broader social interaction; instead, they remain at the threshold of a controlled and fragmented socialization.

All of these discussions show that the difficulties experienced by migrants arise not only from economic, legal, or cultural differences, but also from disruptions in the processes of communication, encounter, and socialization. In this context, recent literature shows that migration is increasingly framed in public discourse through the language of security, crisis, and governance, while debates on social integration have expanded toward questions of belonging, discrimination, participation, and local institutional capacity (Crawley et al., 2016, p. 13; OECD, 2024a, p. 1; OECD, 2024b, p. 11).

6. Digital Mediation and Hybrid Socialization

The communicative and social dimension of migration today has taken on a more hybrid character; migrants now socialize through both face-to-face relations and online networks and digital platforms. However, this expansion does not in itself mean a deeper or more egalitarian form of socialization. As Alencar (2024, p. 1) also points out, although digital technologies may offer important opportunities in migrants' integration processes, this sphere is also shaped by digital inequalities, problems of access, and forms of institutional exclusion; indeed, in some cases state policies may leave migrants in a marginal position in the digital sphere as well. Leurs and Prabhakar (2018, p. 249) likewise show that digital migration studies must now approach the migrant

experience not as an exceptional form of technology use, but as part of the ordinary flow of everyday digital life. For this reason, the problem of migrants' communication today often appears not as an inability to speak, but as an inability, despite having access to multiple channels of communication, to produce equal social encounters and lasting public ties through them.

This transformation also renders the process of socialization more complex. Iazzolino (2023, pp. 4–5) shows that the digital economy does not operate solely as a sphere that opens up new opportunities for livelihood and work for migrant labour; it also draws migrant labour into fragmented, loosely regulated, and often precarious forms of work. This is important because the regime of work affects not only economic position, but also the ways in which migrants establish social relations, their institutional contacts, and the public environments in which they are able to participate. In other words, migrants are no longer trying only to enter a society physically; they are also relating to that society through digital infrastructures, applications, and platforms. Yet this relationship does not automatically guarantee stronger social inclusion. Digital connections may strengthen familial and diasporic continuity, facilitate access to information, and create means of livelihood; however, when they fail to generate reciprocal and transformative relations with wider social environments, they remain partial and fragile solutions that fall short of socialization.

Conclusion

As this chapter has argued, migration cannot be understood merely as population movement, cultural difference, or economic relocation. It is also a process of communication and socialization in which different social actors are compelled to relate to one another under unequal conditions. For this reason, the difficulties experienced by migrants cannot be explained solely through legal status, economic position, or cultural belonging. What is decisive is the extent to which they can access channels of communication, enter institutional domains, encounter different social environments, and be recognized within these relations as equal subjects. The issue is not simply entering a society, but being able to establish reciprocal, continuous, and transformative relations within it.

In this respect, the chapter has shown that cultural recognition, intra-community solidarity, diasporic ties, digital connections, and limited participation mechanisms may create certain spaces of support and relief for migrants; however, these do not in themselves produce full social membership. Migrants may become visible within their own cultural milieu, maintain

connections through digital networks, preserve ties with the homeland, or take part in certain consultative channels; yet when these spheres fail to build bridges to wider social environments, expand institutional access, and translate into equal voice in public interaction, what emerges is not full participation but a fragmented and limited form of inclusion. In other words, the multiplication of ties does not always mean the strengthening of bridges, just as increased visibility does not automatically produce shared membership.

Another factor that further complicates the communicative and social dimension of migration today is that increased connectivity is not the same as deepened encounter. Although platformization and digital mediation facilitate migrants' access to information, their ability to build networks, and the organization of everyday life, the same process may also produce new forms of fragmentation. Recent discussions of platform capitalism and digital surveillance show that migration, mobility, and labour processes are becoming increasingly infrastructuralized; in doing so, they may expand communication while simultaneously reproducing visibility, control, and unequal positioning. In other words, migrants today may be more connected, yet this connectivity does not automatically transform them into more equal social subjects.

For this reason, the central issue in contemporary migration is not simply whether migrants are able to express themselves or make themselves present in certain spheres. The real question is whether forms of relation can be established that generate mutual trust across different social fields, make public voice possible, and transform migrants from passive objects of adaptation into equal social subjects. If communication increases while encounters remain superficial, if channels of participation open while effective subjecthood fails to develop, and if ties multiply while institutional and public bridges remain weak, migration takes the form of a structure that is more connected but not more integrated. Approaches aimed at understanding and governing migration must therefore move beyond merely recognizing cultural differences and instead turn toward a deeper social framework that strengthens conditions of equal contact, institutional access, public voice, and reciprocal socialization.

Finally, what is decisive in the context of migration is not merely the existence of contact, but the quality of that contact. The fact that different groups share the same space, encounter one another in everyday life, or engage in limited communication does not in itself produce mutual recognition, trust, or a sense of shared membership. Contact acquires a socializing function only when it becomes sustained, when a minimum ground of equality exists between the parties, and when encounters open onto mutual learning rather than reproducing stereotypes. Otherwise, contact may increase; yet this increase

may remain less a form of proximity that deepens shared public life than a superficial mode of coexistence that renders distance manageable. For this reason, understanding the communicative dimension of migration requires questioning not only the existence of contact, but also the conditions under which contact can become more equal, sustained, and transformative.

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